This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL
ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL
LIBRARY

From the collection
of the
UNIVERSALIST HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

SELECT

THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY:

CONTAINING

VALUABLE PUBLICATIONS

PRINCIPALLY TREATING OF THE DOCTRINE OF

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

PHILADELPHIA:
GIHON, FAIRCHILD & Co.
1844.

BX
9941
.A1
S44
1844
cop. 2

2892
13-2

CONTENTS.

I. THE UNIVERSAL RESTORATION: exhibited in four Dialogues between a Minister and his Friend; comprehending the substance of several real conversations which the author had with various persons both in America and Europe on that interesting subject: chiefly designed fully to state and fairly to answer, the most common objections that are brought against it, from the Scriptures. By Elhanan Winchester.

II. THOUGHTS ON THE DIVINE GOODNESS, relative to the Government of Moral Agents, particularly displayed in Future Rewards and Punishments. Translated from the French of Ferdinand Olivier Petitpierre, formerly Minister of Chaux-de-Fond.

III. THE TWENTY-FOURTH AND TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTERS OF SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL, ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES, &c. By Hosea Ballou, 2d.

IV. ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT. By T. Southwood Smith, M. D.

V. UNION: or a Treatise of the Consanguinity and Affinity between Christ and his Church. By James Relly.

VI. THE FIRST TRANSGRESSION. A short Essay. By Thomas F. King.

VII. THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS: or a Vindication of the Goodness and Grace of God, to be manifested at last, in the recovery of his Whole Creation out of their Fall. By Jeremiah White, Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell.

VIII. TEN LETTERS ADDRESSED TO MR. PAINE, in answer to his pamphlet, entitled, The Age of Reason: containing some clear and satisfying evidences of the truth of Divine Revelation; and especially of the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. By Elhanan Winchester.

IX. THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL, commanded to be preached by Jesus Christ, Judge of the Living and the Dead, unto all creatures, (Mark xvi. 15,) concerning the Eternal Redemption found out by him, whereby Devil, Sin, Hell, and Death, shall at last be abolished, and the whole creation restored to its primitive purity; being a testimony against the present anti-christian world. By Paul Seigvolck.

THE

UNIVERSAL RESTORATION:

EXHIBITED IN

FOUR DIALOGUES

BETWEEN A

MINISTER AND HIS FRIEND;

COMPREHENDING THE SUBSTANCE OF SEVERAL REAL CONVERSATIONS WHICH THE AUTHOR HAD WITH VARIOUS PERSONS BOTH IN AMERICA AND EUROPE ON THAT

INTERESTING SUBJECT:

CHIEFLY DESIGNED

FULLY TO STATE, AND FAIRLY TO ANSWER THE MOST COMMON OBJECTIONS THAT ARE BROUGHT AGAINST IT, FROM THE

SCRIPTURES.

BY ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

PHILADELPHIA:
GIHON, FAIRCHILD & Co.,

1843.

3X
9911
.A1
S44
1944
c.1 ex.2

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

Rev. Elhanan Winchester, was born at Brookline, Mass., in 1751. He early evinced a contemplative mind, and, being of an awkward appearance, shunned the society peculiar to youth, and devoted his leisure moments to the acquirement of useful knowledge. At the age of five he was considered a good reader; and his taste for reading, together with the rapidity with which he prosecuted his studies, was soon observed by his associates and friends. Books of all kinds which fell in his way were read with avidity; but the Bible was his chief favourite. With its pages he was so familiar, that he was looked upon as a prodigy, for his knowledge of the Scriptures, and strength of memory.

When in his nineteenth year, he underwent what is called by the new lights and orthodox, "conviction and conversion," and soon after commenced preaching, without being received into the church after the usual form. On hearing of a revival in Canterbury, Con., he immediately visited that place, and was baptized by Elder Ebenezer Lyon, and admitted into the Free Will Baptist Church, of which Elder Lyon was pastor. In 1771 he removed to Rehoboth, Mass., and spent the year in its vicinity. His youth, memory, eloquence, and zeal, together with his singular dress and appearance, drew multitudes to his meetings. A revival followed, and a church was soon gathered, over which he was ordained by Elder Lyon. In the course of a short season, he renounced his Arminian sentiments, embraced the system of divinity advocated by Dr. Gill, and became one of the most thorough Calvinists in the country.

In 1772, at the request of his friends, he removed to Grafton, where he preached through the summer. In 1773 he removed to Hull, nine miles east of Boston. In the Autumn of 1774, he started on a journey to the Southern States. On arriving in Charleston, S. C., he soon received an invitation to settle with the Baptist Church at Welsh Neck, on the Great Pee Dee River, sixty miles from Georgetown, which he accepted, and returned to Grafton, Mass., for his family. In October of the next year, he returned with his family as far as Fairfax county, Va., where he was obliged to leave Mrs. W. on account of her ill health. He, however, proceeded on to the place of destination, where he spent the winter. In the Spring he returned for his lady, whom he had left in the charge of a friend, and learned on his arrival, that she was in her grave.

Instead of returning to the South, as he had designed, he came to Boston, and supplied for Dr. Stillman, at the first Baptist church, during the summer. Soon after this he was married to Miss Sarah Peck, of Rehoboth, Mass., and immediately returned to Welsh Neck. A revival followed; Mrs. W. was among the number converted, and soon after sickened and died. Mr. W. was also brought to the side of the grave by sickness, but recovered. In 1778 he was married to Sally Luke, his third wife, for whom he cherished a great affection.

His attention was called to the subject of Universalism in this year, by reading Paul Seigvolk's works, entitled "The Everlasting Gospel," but was not fully converted. The arguments which he there saw, would occasionally arrest his attention, and disposed him to propose them to others, which, to his surprise, they could not answer. On mentioning the subject to another clergyman, he was informed that the doctrine had been controverted in Virginia, but that the daring individual who had preached it was suddenly "cut off from the earth."

During this year he was made to drink deeply of the cup of sorrow, of which he had twice before partook. His third wife died. He was now more zealously engaged than ever, in preaching, and laboured among the slaves with great success, and very soon outgrew his Calvinistic principles, and preached a free salvation. In 1779 he visited New England, preaching on his way in many of the towns through which he passed, half inclined to Universalism, though considering himself its enemy. On the 7th of October, of this year, he arrived in Philadelphia, and commenced preaching to the Baptist church in that city, by their particular request. So great was the excitement produced by his labours, that the house could not contain the people;—therefore the largest house in the city was procured, and was immediately filled to overflowing—the clergy of all denominations comprising a part of his congregations. Though all appeared satisfied with his labours, his own mind was not at rest. The subject of Universal Salvation continued to agitate his thoughts; and he found no quietude, until, by a candid and prayerful examination of the Bible, he became fully satisfied, that "God will have all men to be saved," and that "he doeth according to his will, in heaven and earth."

His change of opinion was soon noised abroad, and produced a great disaffection in many of his former friends. One minister, in particular, met him in the street and parted with him in these words: "If you embrace this sentiment, I shall no longer own you for a brother." And he was true to his word.

In 1781, "on the first Sunday of April, Mr. Winchester was to preach at Germantown, about eight miles from Philadelphia, among the German Baptists, who hold the doctrine of Universal Restoration. As he was leaving the city on Saturday, he found that a number

of eminent ministers had just arrived from the country, on the private request of some of his opposers, to hold a public dispute with him. Giving them the liberty of his pulpit for the next day, he departed for the place of his appointment. During his absence, a report was industriously circulated, that he had fled to avoid an interview; and on Monday, when he returned, the delay occasioned by a funeral that he was called to attend, encouraged his opposers, till they began to deceive themselves with that falsehood they had imposed on others. The multitude was assembled in the meeting-house, impatiently waiting for the dispute; his opposers were reproaching his friends with his flight, and clamourously vaunting over them, when Winchester entered with a serene countenance, and took his seat. A sudden change came over the assembly; his friends were relieved from their anxiety, and they who had boasted so much in his absence, feared to encounter him when present. His astonishing memory, which had already treasured up much of the Scriptures, was well known, and his talents as a public speaker undoubted. The vote of the assembly was then read, by which the Rev. Mr. Boggs had been selected to dispute with Mr. Winchester. Mr. Boggs then arose, and thus addressed the people: "I am not prepared to dispute with Mr. Winchester. I have heard that he says it would take six weeks to canvass all the arguments fairly on both sides; and I suppose that he has been studying on the subject for a week or more, and I have not studied at all." Discovering that there was to be no debate, Mr. Winchester then begged the privilege of explaining and defending his own sentiments, for two hours, and finally for only one hour; but, as might have been anticipated, they who dared not meet him on equal ground, dared not allow him to exhibit his strength; his request was wholly refused. They felt, however, the necessity of providing some business worthy of the great preparations that had been made; and accordingly, when one of the ministers rose and said that their business was not to debate with Mr. Winchester, but to ask him whether he believed that bad men and angels would finally be restored; the rest immediately agreed, and insisted that the question should be put to him. "Do you believe in Universal Restoration?" Mr. Winchester's friends objected to his answering the question, unless he had leave to vindicate his sentiments; but he rose, and observing that he feared no use which could be made of his words, told them plainly, that he did believe the doctrine of Universal Restoration, and was willing to defend it. After some conversation, the ministers advised the church to obtain another pastor; and the matter was so managed, that though Mr. Winchester's adherents were at first a majority of the society, the scale was soon turned against them, and they excluded him from the meeting house.

On the 22nd of April, he delivered a sermon in the hall of the Pennsylvania University, in which he, for the first time, publicly advocated his new sentiments. After preachi four years in this place, a hall was obtaine where he afterwards preached, located on t spot now covered by the Lombard Stre Church; and subsequently the house now i proved by the First Universalist Society, w erected.

At Philadelphia, he resided in the hou owned by his fourth wife, to whom he w married in 1781, and whom he buried in le than two years afterwards, "making him, the age of thirty-two, four times a widower In 1784 he visited South Carolina, and w married to his fifth wife, "a desperate fu whom he loved with a doting fondness." 1787 he visited England, very much to the su prise, and against the will of his New Engla friends, and there remained, preaching various places for the space of six years a a half. While there he wrote and publish his "Dialogues on the Universal Restor tion," his "Lectures on the Prophecies," a "Five Letters in Reply to Rev. Dani Taylor's Sermon on Endless Misery."

In July, 1794, he again arrived in Americ During this and the succeeding year, he trav led in almost all parts of the country, labou ing under a broken constitution, and increasing asthma, which foretold a fat termination.

In October, 1796, he made his first appea ance in Hartford, Con., at the grave of young man. The people were assemble around the grave, when they were surpris at the voice of a stranger, who, unasked, h taken the freedom to address them on the o casion. His language and manner were ve affecting, and excited a general wish to he him again. Accordingly, he gave one or t lectures during the week, and preached t next Sunday in the theatre. A respectab congregation was soon gathered, among whi were some gentlemen of influence.

Thus he continued preaching, till about t 1st of April, 1797, when he delivered a se mon, under a strong impression that it was h last, from St. Paul's farewell address to t elders of the Ephesian Church. He nev entered his desk again. His death was f approaching, and he contemplated it with se nity and joy. On the morning of his decease, requested two or three young ladies, who w sitting by him, to join in singing a hymn, obs ving at the same time, that he might exp before it should be finished. He began wi them, but his voice soon faltered, and t torpor of death fell upon him. They w disconcerted and paused; but he revivi encouraged them to proceed, and joined the first line of each stanza, till he breath no more. This was on the 18th of Ap 1797, in the 47th year of his age.

His funeral was attended on the 21st, b numerous concourse of afflicted friends sympathizing spectators. The Rev. Dr. Str preached the sermon from Heb. ix. 27, which, though an opposer of his sentimen he gave Mr. Winchester an excellent charac and bore a frank testimony to his final c stancy in the doctrine which he had preach

THE UNIVERSAL RESTORATION:

EXHIBITED IN

FOUR DIALOGUES

BETWEEN A MINISTER AND HIS FRIEND.

CONTENTS OF DIALOGUE I.

OBJECTION.—That the words *everlasting*, *eternal*, &c., are applied to the punishment of the wicked.

ANSWER.—These words are but seldom applied to the misery of the wicked; being connected therewith only twice in the Old Testament, and but six times in the New; and are full as often connected with things and times that certainly have had, or will have an end, as they are with the misery of the wicked, &c.

OBJECTION.—But the words *forever and ever*, are applied to the misery of the wicked, &c.

ANSWER.—This is a very strong phrase, and would be judged unanswerable, but for certain considerations:—1. If the phrase *forever and ever* intends any period or periods, longer than the word *forever*, then there must be a proportion, &c. 2. This phrase as applied to future misery cannot intend *endless duration*. 3. It is more than probable that the lake of fire in which men shall be punished with the second death, will be the earth dissolved by the general conflagration, &c.

OBJECTION.—*Forever* when applied to things of this life and world may end, but being applied to things of another state *must* mean *endless*.

ANSWER.—The word *forever* applied to spiritual things and circumstances of another state must not be always understood to mean *endless*.

OBJECTION.—But does not the phrase *forever and ever*, in the New Testament, always intend *endless*?

ANSWER.—It doth not. An undeniable instance brought in proof, to which several more might have been added.

OBJECTION.—But is not the Scripture chargeable with a design to mislead men in these words when applied to future misery, unless they intend *endless duration*? And does not the limiting these words accuse Christ of duplicity and deceit in his threatenings?

ANSWER.—The Hebrew word rendered *everlasting* properly intends a *hidden duration*, or period, but not *endless*.

OBJECTION.—The same word *everlasting* or *eternal* is in the very same verse applied both to the misery of the wicked and to the happiness of the righteous.

ANSWER.—The very same word is in other places applied to very different things, whose natures and durations are entirely dissimilar.

OBJECTION.—But, upon the supposition that the doctrine of *endless damnation* was true, in what manner might one expect it to be expressed in the Bible?

ANSWER.—If it was true, there could be no promises, intimations, or even distant hints to the contrary. And it is therefore shown to be false by a number of positive proofs. If there were not promises and intimations of the *General Restoration* in the Scripture, the doctrine of *endless damnation* might be then concluded to be true, however dark; but the *endless happiness* of the righteous is set forth in much stronger language, and with more abundant force of expression. The *endless* happiness of the righteous stands upon such foundations that can never be overthrown or destroyed; such as their indissoluble union with the original source of life and happiness; their being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and the promise that they shall live because he lives; and his life is truly *endless*.

OBJECTION.—That since the wicked have chosen evil, persevered in it through life, it has become a fixed habit in them, from which it would seem as impossible to reclaim them, as to draw off the just from their attachment to God and goodness.

ANSWER.—This reasoning is founded upon the old pagan system of good and evil being two eternal co-existing principles. All men are God's creatures, and therefore he will not contend forever, nor be always wroth with the souls that he hath made. Satan's kingdom and all evil shall be destroyed, and therefore *endless misery* cannot have the same permanent foundation as *endless happiness*. Two things diametrically opposite to each other cannot both exist together to all eternity.

OBJECTION.—But does not the word *all* frequently intend a part only?

ANSWERED.—By giving certain never failing rules, whereby it may be known when the word *all* means strictly *all*, or the whole universally without any exception; confirmed by plain instances out of St. Paul's writings.

Objection.—That perhaps by *all* things being put under Christ, nothing farther may be meant than their being brought into a state of forced subjection, or made subject to his control.

Answer.—They are now put under him in this respect, but they are not yet put under him in the sense that they shall be, which implies a state of willing subjection. The word *many* frequently means *all*. All things were *created* by Christ; all rebellious beings shall be *subdued* by him, and all without exception shall be *reconciled* by him, and through him, to God.

DIALOGUE I.

Friend.—I have taken the freedom to call upon you, to have a little discourse with you concerning the doctrine of *the Restoration of all Things*, which it is said you believe; and to propose some objections.

Minister.—I am happy to see you, and am willing to discourse, as well as I am able, upon any subject that may be agreeable; but I have always made it a rule never to press the belief of my sentiments upon my friends; and I can safely say, that, though such great pains have been taken by my adversaries, to prejudice people against me, I have never gone about from house to house to propagate my opinions; and I make it a universal rule not to introduce the subject in conversation, unless desired; but yet I never have refused to own my sentiments, when asked, respecting the matter; and am ready, in the fear of God, to answer any objections that can be made, to a doctrine which I believe is plainly revealed in the Scriptures of truth, and appears to me worthy of God.

Friend.—I shall first of all bring to view that grand objection, which is formed from the word *eternal* or *everlasting*, being applied to a future state of punishment; as in the following passages: Isaiah xxxiii. 14. "The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with *everlasting* burnings."

Dan. xii. 2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to *everlasting* life, and some to shame and *everlasting* contempt."

St. Matt. xviii. 8. "Wherefore, if thine hand or thy foot offend thee (or cause thee to offend) cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into *everlasting* fire."

St. Matt. xxv. 41. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into *everlasting* fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Verse 46. "These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment, but the righteous into life *eternal* or *everlasting*." The same word in the original being used for both, though varied by the translators. St. Mark. iii. 29. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of *eternal* damnation.

2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with *everlasting* destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Jude 6, 7. "And the Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in *everlasting* chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day: even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over unto fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire."

These texts, together, form such an objection to the doctrine of the Restoration, that I can by no means believe it, unless this can be fairly answered, and proofs brought from the Scriptures to shew, that the words *everlasting* and *eternal*, (which are translations of the same word and synonymous) being connected with the punishment of the wicked, and their future misery, do not necessarily imply the continuance of the same while God exists.

Minister.—I am glad that you have so fairly and fully stated the matter; and I highly commend your resolution, not to believe the *universal doctrine*, unless this can be answered fully, without any torturing or twisting the Scriptures; and if I am not able with God's assistance, to remove this difficulty, I will publicly recant my sentiments.

But, before I come to give a direct answer I would beg leave to remark how very seldom this word is used to express the duration of punishment. We should think, by some sermons we hear, that *everlasting* is applied to misery in every book of the New Testament if not in every chapter. A friend of mine told me, that he was once preaching in Maryland and after sermon a man came and asked him of what denomination he was. To which he answered, a Baptist. I think, says the man that you do not preach up so much *everlasting damnation* as the Baptists and Methodists among us do. To which my friend replied *everlasting damnation* is found in the Scripture. True, answered the man; but some preachers give us more of it in one sermon than is to be found in the whole Bible. The truth of this remark will appear, if we consider that St. Luke never uses the word *aionios* or *everlasting*, as connected with the misery of the wicked, in his gospel; nor St. Mark but once, and then in a particular case only In the gospel of St. John, it is not to be found at all in that connexion, nor in any of his epistles: in the account of the preaching of the apostles through the world, in the first age of Christianity, we do not find it mentioned, in that light, so much as once: no, not in all the sermons, and parts of sermons, which St. Luke has preserved in the book of the Acts; though

the doctrine of *everlasting damnation* is the substance of many modern discourses. St. Paul never mentions *everlasting destruction* but once, though his writings form a considerable part of the New Testament. Neither are such words found in the Epistle of St. James, or in those of St. Peter, and but three times in the Gospel of St. Matthew: and only twice in all the Old Testament. But was the word *aionion* applied to misery but once in the whole Bible, it would deserve a serious consideration; and unless the force of it can be removed by the authority of the Scriptures, it must remain an unanswerable objection. But I shall proceed to answer it, by bringing an equal number of passages where the word *everlasting* is applied to *things* and *times*, that have had, or must have, an end. As in the following passages: Gen. xvii. 7, 8. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting* covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an *everlasting* possession; and I will be their God." Verse 13. "He that is born in thy house, and bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an *everlasting* covenant."

Here note that the land of Canaan is called an *everlasting* possession; and the covenant of circumcision in the flesh, an *everlasting* covenant, though it is certain that the land of Canaan, as well as the other parts of the earth must be dissolved or melted, in the general conflagration; and *circumcision* is now declared null and void by the Holy Ghost; and the ceremony cannot endure to endless ages.

Of the same kind are the following passages: Gen. xlviii. 3, 4. "And Jacob said unto Joseph, God almighty appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me: and said unto me, behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an *everlasting* possession." And in the blessing of Joseph he says, "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the *everlasting* hills." By which, I suppose, the hills of the land of Canaan were meant.

God saith to Moses, Exod. xl. 15. "And thou shalt anoint them (Aaron's sons) as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; for their anointing shall surely be an *everlasting* priesthood, throughout their generations." Lev. xvi. 34. "And this shall be an *everlasting* statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins, once a year; and he did as JEHOVAH commanded Moses."

The apostle declares, that these *everlasting* ordinances were only *till the time of Reformation*, Heb. ix. 10, and this *everlasting* priesthood of Aaron's son, had ceased long ago: "For the priesthood being changed (by Christ) there is, of necessity a change also of the law. for he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of whom no man gave attendance at the altar: for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident, for that, after the similitude of Melchisedek, there ariseth another priest, who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life: for he testifieth that, thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek: for there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." Heb. vii. 12, 18. The whole sum of the apostle's argument, in this epistle, tends to prove that the *everlasting* ordinance is now no more; and the *everlasting* priesthood of Aaron and his sons is now abolished.

Another passage where the word *everlasting* is evidently used in a limited sense, is Numb. xxv. 11, 12, 13, where we read thus: "Phinehas, the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him. even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood: because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

If the word *everlasting* intends *endless duration*, how shall we be able to reconcile this promise with the total cessation of the Levitical Priesthood? As for the family of Phinehas, with whom this covenant of an *everlasting* priesthood was made, it was entirely deprived of the benefit of the same, within the space of four hundred years; for when the sons of Eli transgressed the covenant, by profaning it, God sent him word, that as they had broken it on their parts, it was entirely, and to all intents and purposes, dissolved. Read 1 Sam. ii. from the beginning of the 12th verse to the end of the 17th, and from the 27th to the end of the chapter: and also, chap. iii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

I will transcribe verse 30, of the second chapter in proof of my point. "Wherefore JEHOVAH, God of Israel, saith, I said indeed, that thy house, and the house of thy father should walk before me *for ever*: but now JEHOVAH saith, be it far from me, for them that honor me, I will honor; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." Hophini, and Phinehas, were soon after slain in one day; and Saul the King of Israel, sent Doag the Edomite, who fell upon the priests and slew fourscore and five persons, who wore a linen ephod, in one day. "And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword; both men, and women, and children, and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword." 1 Sam. xxii. 19. The whole house of Phinehas seems to have been destroyed at this time

except Abiather; and when Solomon came to the throne he thrust him out from being priest, "that he might fulfil the word of JEHOVAH, which he spake concerning the house of Eli, in Shiloh," 1 Kings, ii. 27. From this time the house of Ithamar had the priesthood.

It is so evident that the word which is translated *everlasting*, cannot in the nature of things, absolutely signify, *without end*, that I should not think it worth while to quote any more passages in proof of its intending *age* or *ages*, only, were it not constantly used as a great objection against the universal Restoration; I shall, therefore, instance two or three more in particular, in this place, and refer to a great number of others, of the same kind; all tending to prove the same thing. Heb. iii. 6, "The *everlasting* mountains were scattered, the *perpetual hills* did bow." The gospel is called "The *everlasting* gospel," Rev. xiv. 6, yet it must cease to be preached, when it shall be needed no longer. Jonah saith, "The earth with her bars was about me *forever;* yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption; O JEHOVAH, my God." Jonah ii. 6. But it would be the highest absurdity upon the supposition that the word *Legnolam*, here rendered *forever*, properly signifies *without end*, for him to say, that his life was brought up from corruption; and, therefore, we know that he could not use it in that sense, because, on the third day, he was delivered from his dreadful prison. There is no doubt but the time that he was there, seemed an age, and, while he was thus shut up, there was no intermission to the darkness, and distress that overwhelmed him; and, therefore he might say, with propriety, that earth, with her bars was about him, forever (i. e. *perpetually without cessation*) during the period he remained in the fish's belly; which appeared to him, as a long age indeed. But, as it would be a work of much time and labor to mention all the passages where the word translated *forever*, evidently intends only an age, or period, I shall just direct you to the following; which you may look over at your leisure.

Gen. xiii. 15. xliii. 9. xliv. 32.—Exod. xii. 14, 17, 24. xxi. 6. xxvii. 21. xxviii. 43. xxix. 9, 28. xxx. 21. xxxi. 16, 17. xxxii. 13.—Lev. iii. 17. vi. 13, 18, 20, 22. vii. 34, 36. x. 9, 15, xvi. 29, 31. xxiii. 14, 21, 31, 41. xxiv. 3. xxv. 30, 46.—Numb. x. 8. xv. 15. xviii. 8, 19. xix. 10.—Deut. iv. 40. xv. 17. xviii. 5, 28, 46.—Josh. iv. 7. xiv. 9.—1 Sam. ii. 30. iii. 13. xxvii. 12. xxviii. 2.—1 Kings, xii. 7.—2 Kings, v. 27.—2 Chronicles, x. 7.

Here are more than fifty passages, where the word rendered *for ever* intends only *age*, or *ages;* to which many more might be added.

Now the rule for understanding words is this:—What *must* be the meaning of the word, in *many* places, and what *may* be the meaning in *all;* is the true sense of the same.

Friend.—Although the single word *forever*, in these passages, seems evidently to intend certain unknown *limited* periods; yet what can you do with those texts that say, the misery of the wicked shall endure *for ever and ever*.

Minister.—Indeed they are terrible threatnings; and no doubt will be fully executed.

Friend.—But, do you imagine that such passages as the following can intend less than *endless misery?* Rev. xiv. 11. "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever;* and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Rev. xix. 3. "And here smoke rose up *for ever and ever*." Rev. xx. 10. "And the devil, that deceiveth them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, *for ever and ever*."

Minister.—I confess you have proposed a difficulty that I should judge to be unanswerable, were it not for the following considerations:

1st. If *forever and ever* is a longer time than *forever*, which must be granted; then is there some proportion between them: thus, if *forever* intends an *age, period*, or sometimes *ages; forever and ever*, may intend *ages*, an *age* of *ages*, but any *proportion* at all between two periods supposes both *to have an end*, or there could *be no proportion*.

2dly. I find a time promised, when, "there shall be no more death; neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are (or shall then be) passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me (John) write; for these words are true and faithful." Rev. xxi. 4. 5.

3dly. I think there is sufficient reason, from the words of St. Peter, in his second epistle, 3d chapter, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12th verses, to conclude, that as the earth was once overflowed with water, and became truly a lake of water, wherein the world of ungodly men perished; so, by the general conflagration, the same shall become literally the lake of fire and brimstone, in which the wicked shall be punished after the day of judgment: but I also think, that the 13th verse of the same chapter, compared with Rev. xxi. 1. Isaiah lxv. 17. lxvi. 22, more than intimates, that the new heaven and earth shall be created out of the substance of the old, dissolved by the fire; that the *new earth* shall no more have a *sea* therein, seems to imply, that in its former state, it had a sea, or why this expression, "and there was no *more* sea."—Now, if this hypothesis is right, the following will be the true state of the case, viz.

The lake of fire is expressly declared to be "the second death," Rev. xx. 14. The earth, in its burnt, melted and dissolved state will be the general lake of fire and brimstone according to the verses above cited from St. Peter. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, created out of the substance of the old, in which there will be no more sea, either of water, or of liquid fire; consequently the lake of fire, or second death, (which are declared to be synonymous) must end; and, of

course, the punishment of the second death must then cease.

4thly. The *smoke* of their torments is to ascend up *for ever and ever*, and they are to be tormented day and night. But, as the smoke of their burning earth must cease, when its substance is entirely dissolved or melted, and all combustible bodies are consumed; and as it is intimated in Job xxvi. 10, that day and night shall come to an end; and in Rev. xxi. 25, it is said of the New Jerusalem, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there." For all these reasons, I cannot be altogether persuaded, that their being tormented *day and night, forever and ever*, during which time the smoke of their torment shall constantly ascend, is quite equal to *endless misery*, especially as there shall come a time when *death* shall be no more, *pain* shall be no more, *sorrow* shall be no more, *smoke* shall probably ascend no more, and peradventure, *night* shall be no more.

5thly. But the great reason of all, why I do not conceive that *forever and ever*, doth certainly intend *endless duration*, is because I find the words as often used for *times* and *periods*, that must have an end, as you find them used for the misery of the wicked.—You bring three passages, which are all that are to be found in the whole Bible, where they are used in that sense; I shall now invalidate those evidences for *endless damnation*, by bringing an equal number of texts where you will allow the words are used in a limited sense.

Friend.—Is it possible that you can find any such passages in the Bible? Pray shew them to me.

Minister.—Isa. xxx. 8. "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, *for ever and ever*."

See Jer. vii. 1, 7. The 7th verse is, "Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, *for ever and ever*."

Jer. xxv. 5. "Turn ye again, now, every one from his evil way, and every one from the evil of your doing, and dwell in the land that JEHOVAH hath given unto you, and to your fathers, *for ever and ever*."

These passages are as many, and as strongly expressed, as those which you brought to prove *endless misery;* and yet nothing can be more evident than that they cannot intend *endless duration*. Here, these periods must be limited by the great conflagration; and thus (for ought that appears as yet) the misery of the wicked *may* be *limited* notwithstanding the use of those expressions, to set forth its dreadful continuance to unknown ages; at least, those words do not necessarily imply, that they shall never, as long as God lives, be delivered from their sins and consequent sufferings.

If we were always to read *for ever and ever*, endless, we should set the scriptures at variance; and no criticism could ever reconcile them. Try, for instance, to reconcile Psalm cii. 25, 26, with Psalm cxlviii. 6. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. He hath also established them *for ever and ever;* he hath made a decree which shall not pass."

Now, if the words *forever and ever* signify *without end*, then there is a contradiction that cannot be reconciled; but only understand them *ages of ages*, (as, indeed, they ought to be rendered) and the whole difficulty vanishes at once.

Suppose a person should read Rev. xx. 11. and xxi. 1. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea:" and should then say, these visions cannot be true, because Solomon hath said, "One generation passeth away, and another cometh, but the earth abideth *for ever*." Eccl. i. 4. "And God laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed, *for ever*." Psalm civ. 4. "The world also is established that it cannot be moved." Psalm xciii. 1. See also Psalm lxxviii. 69, and xcvi. 10. What would you think of such reasoning? Just so weak, must all the reasoning against the universal Restoration be, from the words *for ever* and *for ever* and *ever*, being applied to states of future misery, if God had promised to put an end to them all, by reconciling all things to himself, destroying sin, and introducing a new creation, and a state of universal and permanent happiness: for if such promises really exist, and their existence can be demonstrated, all reasoning against them must be vain and futile.

Friend.—It is certain that when the word *forever* is applied to things of this life and the world, it intends *a period;* but when applied to spiritual matters, and things of another world, it must be *endless*, according to my judgment; and I am apt to think, you will find it so too.

Minister.—I am certain that you will soon be convinced to the contrary. The apostle, speaking of Christ, says, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever* sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." Heb. x. 12, 13. You will please to notice, that Christ's sitting down in the heavens, on the right hand of God, is not a circumstance belonging to *this world* or *the things of time;* and he is to set there *forever;* and yet that period, which according to your hypothesis must be *endless* is expressly limited by the sacred writings. The heavens have received him, "until the times (seasons or ages) of restitution of all things," (that is till the beginning, and not the ending of those

ɜs) which God hath spoken of by the ıth of all his holy prophets since the ld began." Acts iii. 21. And the whole v Testament teacheth us to wait for the ing of Jesus from heaven; (1 Thess. i.) which would be highly absurd upon the position, that he is always to abide there: ch yet he must, if the word *for ever*, as lied to things of another state, intends *end*- duration.

riend.—I confess, I never observed this re.—But, do you know of any passages ıe New Testament, where the words, *for- and ever*, certainly intend *limited* dura- ? For I observed, that all the instances brought were from the Old Testament.

finister.—Yes: Heb. i. 8. But unto the he saith, "Thy throne, (in distinction ı the throne of the Father) O God, is *for- and ever*;" yet we read, (1 Cor. xv. 34, of the end, when he shall have "delivered the kingdom to God, even the Father; n he shall have put down all rule, and all ority and power; and then shall the Son himself, be subject unto him that put all gs under him, that God may be all in all."

riend.—But when Christ threatened sin- , with *everlasting* fire, *everlasting* punish- t, and *eternal* damnation; did not his ex- sions naturally convey the idea of *endless ry?* And may not the Son of God be ac- d of duplicity and deceit, if he did not n to denounce *punishment without end?* , therefore, if we believe his words to be as most certainly they are, we must re- the doctrine of the restoration, which puts ınd to a state, which is called *everlasting*, he mouth of truth itself.—Are you able to ver this fairly?

Minister.—If I am not able to answer this ɜtion, which you have stated in the ıgest manner, I assure you, I will confess elf in an error; and shall thank you, (as nstrument) for bringing me to know it. same objection that you make against the oration, the Jews make against *Christ* and *eligion;* for they argue thus: God is an ıangeable Being, and he declared, in most nn manner, that the ordinances of the tical dispensation should be *everlasting*, the anointing of Aaron's sons should be *verlasting* priesthood, throughout their rations; (See Exod. xl. 15, and Lev. xvi. —and, therefore, we must reject the Mes- of the Christians, as an impostor; inas- ı as he pretends to abolish those statutes, ɜh God hath called *everlasting*, and to set ɜelf up as a Priest, contrary to the express ıise of the LORD, who cannot lie, nor re- , that Aaron and his sons should have an *asting* priesthood; and, therefore, if this e true Messiah, God meant to deceive us n he promised us these *everlasting* bless- , and privileges, which, we must suppose ı only *for a time*, if Christianity be true; ɜfore, we reject it, as being inconsistent the promises of God.

is evident, from this view of the matter, the Jews reject Christ and his religion, upon as good ground as you reject the Universal Restoration, and perhaps better; for you have nothing to plead against the Restoration, but some threatenings of punishments, which are called *everlasting* or *eternal*, in our translation, but they plead express promises of the *everlasting* continuance of their church state and worship, in opposition to Christianity. But if it be true that both the Hebrew and Greek words, which our translators have rendered by the English word *everlasting*, do not intend *endless duration* but a *hidden period*, or *periods;* then the ground is changed at once, and the Jews have no right to object against Christianity, because God promised a continuance of their temple worship, for *a certain age*, or *hidden period;* nor the Christians to reject the universal Restoration, because God hath threatened the rebellious with such dreadful punishments, which shall endure through periods, expressed in the same terms. It is indeed confessed by some of the most learned Jews, that they have no word in their language, which absolutely signifies *endless duration;* therefore they can only argue the *endless* continuance of any thing from its nature, and not merely from the words rendered *forever* or *everlasting*. And if this is the truth of the case (as who can deny it?) then, neither did Jehovah speak to deceive the children of Israel, when he promised them blessings of such long continuance which have ended long ago, and which are never to be restored by virtue of that covenant which he made with their fathers, when he brought them out of Egypt; but by the new covenant which he *will* make with them when he shall return them to their own land; nor did the Son of God speak to deceive, when he threatened the wicked with those punishments, which shall not end till they have answered the purposes for which it seems reasonable to believe they shall be inflicted, viz.: to bring them down and humble their proud and stubborn hearts; which shall be done, during the periods of his kingdom, before he shall have delivered it up to the Father, that God may be ALL in ALL.

Friend.—But if I should grant that the word *aionion* doth not even in the New Testament always signify *endless duration*, yet what would you gain by it, since it is plain that Christ hath set *the happiness of the righteous*, and *the misery of the wicked*, one against the other; and hath expressed the continuance of both, by the same word, *aionion*, in St. Matth. xxv. 46. Here, the punishment of the wicked, and the life of the righteous, are both declared to be *aionion* or *eternal*, without distinction. Now can you show me any passage of scripture, where the same word is applied to two different things, whose existence is not the same, or the time of their continuance not alike?

Minister.—Fairly stated! And if it be not as fairly answered, it shall be looked upon as an insuperable difficulty. But, happily, there is a passage in Heb. iii. 6, where the same word is used for very different things; "He

stood and measured the earth; He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the *everlasting* mountains were scattered, the *perpetual* hills did bow. His ways are *everlasting*." In our translation, the mountains, and the ways of God, are called *everlasting*, and the hills *perpetual*; but in the original, the word *gnad* is applied to the mountains, and the word *gnolam* to the hills, and the ways of God. But whether we argue from the original or from the translation, it makes no difference. The question is, are the mountains, or the hills, *eternal* in the same sense in which the ways of God are? If so, the earth must have existed *coeval* with the ways of Jehovah, and the hills and mountains must never be removed, while his ways endure; and, as his ways can never be destroyed, the absolute eternity not of the earth only, but of its present form, its mountains and hills, must be inferred; contrary to Isaiah xl. 4, xliv. 10—Ezek. xxxviii. 20—Pet. iii. 7, 10, 11, 12—Rev. xvi. 20, xx. 11. Nay, even in this very text, the ways of God are spoken of as being of a different nature from the mountains, which are *scattered*, and the hills, which did *bow*.

Thus, no solid argument can be drawn from the application of the same word to *different* things, to prove that they shall be equal in their continuance, unless their nature be the same.

Thus in the Greek New Testament, in Rom. xvi. 25, we read of the mystery which hath been kept secret, from *Chronois aioniois*, and in the 26th verse, we find, that it is now made known by the commandment *Tou aionion Theou*. But must it be argued, that because *aioniois* is applied to times, and *aionion* to God; therefore, *times* are as ancient as Jehovah, and must continue while he exists? The absurdity of this is too glaring. Our translators have rendered *Chronois aioniois*, "since the world began," instead "of eternal times;" and have thereby shown their judgment to be, that words cannot change the subjects to which they are applied, but the meaning of the words must be determined by the nature of the subject.

In Jer. xxviii. 8, the word *hegnolam* is used in the Hebrew; but the translators did not think themselves obliged to render it "*from everlasting*" or, "*from eternity*;" as it would have been highly absurd to have read, *eternal* prophets, or prophets which were from *eternity*; and have therefore rendered it "*of old*" though it is a stronger word than *gnad*, which they have translated "*eternity*." Isa. lvii. 15.

Many other instances of the like nature might be brought; but these are fully sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind, that nothing can be concluded in favour of *endless punishment*, from the word *aionion* being used to set forth the duration of it, as well as the duration of that life which our Saviour promises to the righteous.

But upon the supposition that our Saviour intends no more by the "life eternal," in the 46th verse of the 25th of St. Matthew's gospel, than he doth in the 34th verse, by "the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world," (which it would be hard to prove) then an answer might be given without all this labour, in this manner, viz., that as the Father hath appointed Christ a kingdom, so he hath also appointed his saints a kingdom; (see St. Luke xxii. 29, 30.—Rev. ii. 26, 27, iii. 21.) but as the kingdom which the Father hath given to Christ, as Mediator, and as Judge, shall *end*, when he shall have subdued all things, and put down all rule, and authority, and power; (See 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.) so, of consequence, that kingdom which is given to the saints or overcomers, to subdue the nations, shall also *end*, when they all shall be subdued, and brought to submit. But as the glory of Christ shall not be *lessened* but *increased*, when God shall be ALL in ALL; so the happiness of the saints shall be so far from ending or being *diminished*, at that period, that it shall then arrive at the summit of perfection; but shall never close nor decrease while JEHOVAH endures.

Some time ago, a woman came to hear me, and I happened to mention in my sermon, that Christ's mediatorial kingdom was called *everlasting* or *aionion*; but that *it must come to an end*, when the kingdom should be delivered up to the Father, when he should have put down all rule, and all authority and power. After sermon, she was asked how she liked? She answered, "Not at all: he says the *everlasting* kingdom of Christ shall end, and I never heard of such a thing before in all my life; and I am sure it must be contrary to Scripture." The person who asked her, told her, that there was such a text somewhere, she could not tell exactly where to find it. But the woman persisted in it, that there was no such text; and went away full of prejudice. Now, had this passage of Scripture been in the book of Revelations, it would not have been so much to be wondered at, that she had never heard of it; but when we consider, that this is expressed in that part of the 15th chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, which is in the *burial service*—what shall we say?

Thus, if *Christ's* kingdom *shall end*, much more *Satan's!* If *rewards*, as such, shall cease, how much more *punishments!* If the *everlasting* kingdom of the saints, which they shall possess *forever* and *ever* (See Dan. vii. 18, 27.) shall end, or be swallowed up in that kingdom of boundless love, where God shall be ALL in ALL; how much more, shall all sin, pain, sorrow and death, cease, and have no more a name in God's creation!

Friend.—But supposing the doctrine of *endless misery* to be a truth, how would you expect to find it expressed in the Bible?

Minister.—I should have a right to expect, in the first place, that there would be no promises in the Scripture to the contrary; no such passages as these: "For I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return; that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." Isaiah xlv. 23. Mind well, EVERY TONGUE SHALL SWEAR. Swearing

allegiance, as every civilian will tell you, implies *pardon*, *reception* and *protection*, on the part of the king; and a hearty *renouncing of rebellion*, *true subjection*, and *willing obedience*, on the part of the rebels. Kings of the earth may be deceived, but God cannot; he will never accept of any feigned subjection; and, therefore, all that swear, shall swear in truth and righteousness;—so shall rebellion cease, and disobedience be no more.

The apostle St. Paul, seems to quote this passage of Scripture with some variation, in his epistle to the Phillippians, chap. ii. 9, 10, 11; where, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, and the consequences of the same, he says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at (*or* in) the name of *Jesus* every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Now this confession appears to me to imply *a willing subjection to the authority of the Saviour*, brought about by the operation of the blessed Spirit; for the same apostle saith, "Wherefore, I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Then the argument thrown into a syllogistical form, will run thus:

If every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; then shall all rebellion cease.

But the first is true; therefore also the last. If every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; then shall the Holy Ghost work effectually in every man. As the major is proved by Phil. ii. 11, and the minor by 1 Cor. xii. 3, the conclusion must be evident to a demonstration.

Friend.—I acknowledge, that in the present state, no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost; but when they shall stand before his bar, they shall confess him Lord, to the glory of God the Father *by force.*

Minister.—But St. Paul speaks generally, "That no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." He does not mention *time* or *place*, but represents the matter impossible; beside every expression here used, implies *a willing*, and not *a forced subjection*; as bowing in the *name* of *Jesus* and confessing him to be *Lord* of all, to the *glory* of *God* the *Father.*

Friend.—But we are sometimes told, that God is as much glorified by the eternal damnation of some, as by the eternal salvation of others.

Minister.—I have, indeed, heard some assert the same. But as the glory of God is the ultimate end of all that he doth, we may properly ask, why he should take any pains to save mankind?

But, above all, there is one objection that may be brought against this idea, which is hard to answer; and that is, God hath said, "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xviii. 23, xxxiii. 11. It is evident to me, that God must take pleasure in what glorifies his name; and as he hath sworn that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, it must be set down for a truth, that *punishment*, without having the reformation and subjection of rebels for its end, is unworthy of the Being we adore; and even now, it is called "*his strange work*," and "*his strange act.*" But to proceed: If *endless* misery were a truth, I should not expect that the mystery of the will of God, which he hath made known unto his chosen, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself would be, "That, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one (*or* rehead) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth," Ephes. i. 9, 10. Far less should I expect to find, that "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."—Col. i. 19, 20. And I am not able to imagine, how St. John's vision (Rev. v. 13.) could be just, if *endless damnation* is true, where he says, "And every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." In the nature of things, it appears impossible to me to believe these passages to be strictly and literally true, if *endless misery* be a truth: therefore I say, that I should not expect any *intimation*, far less *absolute promises*, that God would destroy death, the works of the devil, and make all things new, with many others of the like nature

We find it promised, that every knee shall bow; and lest some might say, that *every* knee, meant only *some* knees, it is explained by the inspired apostle, to mean *all* things in heaven and in earth, and under the earth; and not only so, but every tongue shall *swear*, and *confess* that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; which could not be, except all were reconciled to him, whether things in heaven, or things in earth: wherefore this is also promised; and, in consequence of their being subdued, humbled, made obedient, and reconciled, they shall be *rehead-ed in Christ*; never more to go astray, nor break that band of eternal union, which shall bind all together in one body, joined to one head; and all shall give never ceasing praise to God and to the Lamb, *world without end.*

As endless damnation appears to me to be *against the promises*, I cannot hold it as an article of my faith; but were there no promises or intimations to the contrary in Scripture, I should not require it to be threatened in any stronger terms than it is; I should believe it as a truth, though I might not be able at present, to see the propriety and equity thereof; I should never suffer my weak reason to gainsay Divine Revelation: but my difficulty arises from these express promises of God, which compose so great a part of that book which is given us as a rule of faith and practice; and which promises expressly assert a future state of things beyond sin, sorrow, pain, and death of every kind; when all things shall be made new; and death, the last enemy of God, Christ, and man, shall be destroyed, swallowed up in victory; and sin, which is its sting, shall be no more in existence; and tears shall be all wiped away from all faces.

But, though I have acknowledged that I should not dare to dispute the doctrine of *endless damnation*, unless God had given *intimations*, and even *promises* to the contrary; since I find several dreadful threatenings in the Scripture, in which the word *aionion*, or *everlasting*, is joined with the punishment of the wicked; yet a very little attention will shew us, that the felicity of the righteous is promised in much stronger language, than the misery of the wicked is threatened in the Scriptures.

I remark in the first place, that the word *aionion*, rendered *everlasting*, or *eternal*, is used much oftener in St. John's gospel alone, to express the continuance of the life, or well being, of the righteous, than it is used in the whole Bible, to express the misery of the wicked; and this remark is strengthened by observing that he never once uses the word in his whole gospel, nor in his epistles, to set forth the duration of punishment. See St. John iii. 15, 16, 36, iv. 14, v. 24, vi. 27, 40, 47, 54, 68, x. 28, xii. 25, 50, xvii. 2, 3, in all which passages, the word *aionion* is used to express the continuance of the well being of the righteous.

But not to insist on this: I observe, that there are many stronger expressions (even in our translation) to set forth the well being of the righteous, than any that are used as connected with the misery of the wicked. Isaiah xlv. 17, we read, "Israel shall be saved in JEHOVAH with an *everlasting* salvation; ye shall not be ashamed, nor confounded, *world without end*." But where do we read, that the misery of the wicked shall have no *end?* The word *endless*, or *world without end*, is never once used by our translators, to express the eternity of punishment, in the whole Bible.

We read, in 1 Pet. i. 4, of "an inheritance, *incorruptible*, and undefiled; and that *fadeth not away*, reserved in heaven:" and in Chap. v. 4, of "a crown of glory, that *fadeth not away*;" and, Heb. xii. 23, of a "kingdom, which cannot be moved:" and our blessed Saviour's words are remarkably strong upon this subject, in many places; as, in St. Luke's gospel, Chap. xx. 35, 36, where he says, "But they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the (first) resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither *can they die any more*; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection:" and in St. John, x. 27, 28, 29, we read thus: "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall *never perish*, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." In Chap. xi. 25, 26, Christ says, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall *never die*." And in chap. vi. 50, he says, "This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not *die*." And he expresses the perpetuity of the heavenly bliss, and of our enjoyment of the same, by advising us, saying, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth," St. Matth. vi. 20, and St. Luke, xii. 32, 33. This is that which St. Paul calleth "a better and an enduring substance," Heb. xii. 34. But what shall I say of the apostle's words, 2 Cor. iv. 7? "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us, *kath hyperbolen eis hyperbolen aionion baros doxes katergazetai emin*: a glory exceeding *aionion*, or eternal, *to an excess*." Here is an hyperbole upon hyperbole; beyond eternal; a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory.

But it is not so much by the different words made use of to denote the permanency of the felicity of the righteous, from those which are used to express the duration of the misery of the wicked, that I judge of the *continuance of the one* beyond the other; so much as from the different sources from whence they flow, and of their different natures.

The happiness of those who are reconciled to God arises from their union to Christ; in which if they continue grounded and settled during this present life, wherein they pass through so many sore trials, the union will become so permanent, as that it will be impossible to dissolve it; and the very nature of things shews, that if we abide firm to the end, through all difficulties, and overcome all those things that would seek to separate us from Christ, when we come into that state where we shall meet with no more temptations, nor any thing that has the least tendency to draw our minds from God, we must, of consequence, remain attached, or united to

him while we have an existence. This doctrine was known to David; and therefore, he said, "While I live, will I praise JEHOVAH; I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any being." Psal. cxlvi. 2, civ. 33. It may be proved, that the union shall continue between Christ and his faithful ones after this life, and shall become indissoluble; and that neither "tribulation, nor distress, persecution nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword; neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us (who abide in him) from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." See Rom. viii. 35–39. See also St. John xv. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10. 1 John ii. 24, 28.

The never ending continuance of the life, or state of well being of the righteous, may be certainly inferred, with the greatest ease, from the continuance of the life of Christ; who is made an high priest, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life," Heb. vii. 16. And he hath expressly declared, "Because I live, ye shall live also," St. John xiv. 19. Thus as long as the cause remains, the effect must continue; but the cause, even the life of Christ, must undoubtedly continue to endless periods; therefore also, the effect, or the life of those who are joined to him in an indissoluble union, shall continue. The apostle Paul understood logic as well as any in our days: and he thus reasons upon this glorious truth; "The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we (who are led by the Spirit of God, and have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father) are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. viii. 16, 17.

Now, as Christ, the principal heir, cannot be disinherited; so, neither can those who are joint heirs with him. The Holy Spirit is given us as the earnest of our inheritance, and to seal us to the day of redemption, 2 Cor. v. 5, Ephes. i. 13, 14, and iv. 20.—Christ is the head, and the overcomers through the blood of the Lamb, are the members of his body, and shall inherit all things; he will be their God, and they shall be his children; he is their life, and he "will make them pillars in the temple of God, and they shall go no more out," Rev. iii. 12. St. Paul says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4.—And St. John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 1, 2. Thus, we are sure, from the Scriptures, and from the nature of things, that those who are drawn by the Father, united to the Son, sealed by the Holy Ghost, willingly choose the Lord for their portion, and constantly adhere to him to the end, shall never be separated from him in the future ages; for he himself saith, "As the living father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," St. John vi. 57. And as Christ is the great attracting loadstone, that shall finally draw all things to him; it is evident, that he will preserve *for ever*, those whom he hath thoroughly drawn to himself, and who have adhered to him through the time of trial. Thus is the life eternal of the righteous, or their endless state of well being, expressed in much stronger language than the misery of the wicked; and moreover, has its foundation in the union between Christ and his church, and in the nature of things.

Friend.—But if the Spirit of God dwelling in us, and thereby causing us to adhere to Christ, and to follow him through all trials, makes our union to him so perfect, that nothing shall be able to separate us from him to all eternity; since we are confirmed in habits of goodness by free choice, and by oft repeated exercises; why, by the same rules, shall not the misery of the wicked be *endless*, seeing that they have chosen and adhered to evil through life, and by constant practice are confirmed therein? Evil is grown up to a body in them; and it appears to me as difficult to reform and bring them off from their vicious habits, as it would be to draw the saints in light from their adherence to virtue and goodness.

Minister.—Your reasoning would be conclusive, upon the supposition that there are two eternal principles, viz.: *good* and *evil*; if it can be proved, that evil is coexistent with goodness, that it hath always been; then, the absolute eternity of sin and misery may be easily inferred. This is the true foundation of *endless misery*, and it came from the Pagan theology. The Heathens believed in two *eternal principles*, ever warring against each other, and neither fully prevailing; that men had the liberty of enlisting under which they pleased; and that those who in life choose virtue should enjoy endless felicity; while those who chose and adhered to vice, would eternally remain under its dominion, and of consequence be always miserable. Thus, the infernal deities being judged by the poor Pagans to be as eternal as the good gods, and more powerful; they sacrificed more to the evil principle than to the good, out of fear, and to appease the anger of those abhorred, malevolent agents; hence the frequency of human sacrifices.

Now, when the Christian Religion triumphed over Paganism in the Roman empire, many of the philosophers embraced and professed it, but withal, retained many of their Pagan notions; among which was the *eternity* of these two opposite principles; hence arose the ancient sect of the Manichees, who believe not only the eternal existence of two contrary eternal Gods, one good and the other evil; but

also, that all visible things are created by the devil; and upon this principle, they might argue the universality of damnation, with as much ease and certainty, as we, upon the contrary, may argue the certainty of the Universal Restoration, according to that glorious promise of God, Isaiah lvii. 16, 17, 18, 19, "for I will not contend forever, neither will I always be wroth; for the Spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me and was wroth; and he went on frowardly, in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith JEHOVAH; and I will heal him."

Those who venture to contradict their Maker, and say, that he will contend *for ever*, and be *always wroth*; ought to give as good a reason, at least, why he will, as he hath given why he will not; and, consequently, must prove him not to be the Father of all spirits, and the Creator of all souls. If, therefore, it can be demonstrated, that Satan is an eternal, self-existent, immutable, evil being, and that he hath created all, or a part of mankind, (as some asserted formerly, and as I myself have heard lately) or that he hath drawn some of God's creatures into such a union with himself, that they cannot be separated from him; and that he will maintain his crown, throne and kingdom, in opposition to God, to all endless duration; then, and not till then, may the *eternity* of sin and misery, be concluded from the nature of things, with equal ease and certainty, as the perfection and happiness of the saints.

But if the kingdom of evil, and all the works of sin, Satan and darkness, shall be totally destroyed by Christ, and all things shall be reheaded in him, who is the head of all principality and power, as well as of every man,—(See Ephes. i. 10, Col. ii. 10, 1 Cor. xi. 3,)—if every knee shall bow, and tongue shall swear, and all things, whether in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, shall confess that he is Lord; and all things whether in heaven or in earth, shall be reconciled to him,—(See Isaiah xlv. 23, Phil. ii. 10, Col. i. 20,)—and all kingdoms (not excepting that of the prince of the power of the air) shall be broken and destroyed by the kingdom of Christ, which shall itself be yielded up into the kingdom of boundless love, where judgment shall be no more,—what shall we say of that doctrine, that teaches us the *endless duration of evil?* So far is the *endless sin* and misery of the wicked from being inferred from the *endless* holiness and felicity of the righteous, in the kingdom of the Father, that every proof and demonstration of the latter, concludes equally against the former.

One of the first arguments that ever began to take hold of my mind, and to bring me to think seriously of the system of the Restoration, was what I read in a little book upon the subject, called *The Everlasting Gospel*, &c., and is there thus expressed.

"It is as impossible that there should be two endless contrary things, as that there should be two real contrary Deities, a good God and a bad one, or two sorts of contrary creatures, both of truly divine original, some being made good by God, and others bad. For an absolute and merely infinite duration, which has neither beginning nor end, is, according to the confessions of all divines, yea, of every reasonable man, a property peculiar to the uncreated Being only. But such an infinite duration, which, although it has a beginning, yet shall have no end, can only be the property of those creatures that are of divine original. For as these, according to the language of the scripture, are of divine origin, and therefore are rooted in God, or in his almighty creating power, which has no beginning, they can also be everlasting, their existence or duration can also be without end in God. But whatsoever has not its eternal root in God, or in his eternal creating power, but is sprung up in the creature in this world, by its voluntary turning away from God, and against his holy will, and consequently is an admonition and displeasure to the Most High, and is only suffered by him, such as sin, and the punishment depending thereon, these things cannot possibly be of an absolute endless existence and duration, or remain so long as God shall exist; but must of necessity once cease and be annihilated. For as God is a Being to those creatures which he created good, and which exists through his will, wherein they may subsist and be preserved without end; so he on the contrary, to iniquity and sin, (which against his will, is sprung up in and sticks to the creatures) is a consuming fire, whereby all sin and perverseness in the creatures must be at last consumed, annihilated, and separated from them in the highest degree, in order to restore them to their primitive purity; in the same manner as the fire doth not consume and destroy the gold, but only the dross, and that which is impure."

We will now state some of the arguments in favour of the *endless* continuance of the happiness of the saints, in the kingdom of their Father: and those which prove that the state of misery shall come to an end.

Christ hath promised, that the happiness of the saints shall have no end; because *his life* shall have no end, and he is *their life*.

The misery of the wicked shall end, because the kingdom of evil shall end.

The power of God stands engaged to preserve and keep those who commit themselves to him; and thus, their union with him shall always continue.

The same is engaged to destroy that covenant with death, and the argument with hell, whereby sinners are held in subjection to Satan, and thus to take the prey from the mighty, and the captives from the terrible.

The subjects of Christ are his natural subjects; he is their rightful sovereign: but

Satan's subjects are slaves led captive by him at his will; he is an usurper, and all that are in bondage to him belong to Christ, who will finally draw them all to himself.

Those that are in bliss shall be eternally attracted by him, and shall always choose that which is good; but when evil is broken, its influence shall no more prevail over those that are captivated by it; and they shall feel the consequences of sin in such a manner as to loathe it; and they shall heartily return, and swear allegiance to their rightful King.

There shall be no influence to draw the saints in bliss from Christ, and thereby dissolve his kingdom; but all the influence of God and goodness, shall tend to dissolve the kingdom of darkness, and to put an end to the thraldom and misery of its unhappy slaves.

Thus, I might go on with a long train of arguments upon this subject; but these may suffice.

Friend.—Your arguments would seem very conclusive, for the entire subjection of all things, if you could prove that the word ALL, intends literally and mathematically, the whole, without exception; but this I think, will be difficult for you to do, as you must know that it is very frequently used in common language for a part; and sometimes for only a small part of mankind.

Minister.—I acknowledge this is the case in common conversation, and in such parts of the sacred history where we are in no danger of being misled by it, being well informed by the context, or some other passages, or from the nature, or from the circumstances of the facts, that we must take it in a limited sense; but I do not recollect any passage, where any point of doctrine is spoken of, in which the word ALL is used in that uncertain and undeterminate manner; and it is necessary that it should not be used in that way, in matters of importance; because we might be led into confusion and great uncertainty thereby; not knowing whether to understand it universally, or partially.—Wherefore I lay down this plain rule, viz., when the word ALL is used in any passage of Scripture, and we are not necessarily obliged, either by the context or some other text, or the nature and circumstances of the case, to understand it partially; and especially where any important point of doctrine is spoken of, we are always to understand it universally, without exception.

Friend.—But can you prove from the writings of the apostles, that they used the word ALL in this large and universal sense?

Minister.—Yes, my friend, very easily, and in the most unexceptionable manner. Hear what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says upon this matter: "Thou hast put ALL *things* in subjection under his feet; for in that he put ALL in subjection under him; he left nothing that is not put under him." Heb. ii. 8.

It is evident, that the apostle's reasoning would be very inaccurate, if not entirely false, upon the supposition that ALL *things* did not intend ALL, in the largest sense; for how would this conclusion naturally and necessarily follow, "For in that he put ALL in subjection under him, he left *nothing* that is not put under him;" unless it be premised, that ALL is used in the universal sense of the word.

Friend.—But hath not the same apostle made an exception, when he used the word ALL, in some other of his writings?

Minister.—Yes, truly; but it is such an exception as justifies this sense of the word, more than a thousand arguments: "For he hath put ALL *things* under his feet; but when he saith, ALL *things* are put under him, it is manifest, that *he is excepted which did put* ALL *things under him.*" 1 Cor. xv. 27. Here God the Father being alone excepted, proves all other beings to be included in the words ALL *things*; and that in so convincing a manner, that I am astonished that I did not perceive it long before I did.

Friend.—It is true, that nothing can be plainer, than that ALL *things* in these places, must mean ALL beings except God; but then, perhaps, St. Paul only meant, that they should be subject to his control, and not brought willingly to obey. If you can prove this point as clearly as you have the other, and from the same authority, it will seem to put the matter with me beyond dispute.

Minister.—This is very easily done; for it is universally acknowledged by all Christians, that all things are now, and have ever been subject to his control; for when he was upon earth, in his lowest state of humiliation, even the unclean spirits, the most rebellious of beings obeyed his word; which made those who saw his miracles cry with amazement, "what thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." St. Mark, i. 27. The devils obeyed him universally in whatever he commanded them; and could not enter into the swine without his permission; and how disagreeable soever his words were to them, they were *forced* to comply, without daring to complain; yea, they frequently seemed like humble suppliants; and once we read, they went so far as to adjure our blessed Lord not to torment them. See St. Mark, v. 7. The winds, waves, fishes, all obey him; all diseases, and even death itself, heard his voice, and departed at his bidding; and to his disciples he said, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth." Matth. xxviii. 18. And certainly now, he is at "the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers, are made subject unto him." 1 Pet. iii. 22. God hath exalted him far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion; and every name that is named; not only in this *age* (for so I render the word *aioni*) but also in that which is to come; and put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." Ephes. i. 21, 22. But as though the apostle had known that the sense would be disputed, he hath said, "But now we see *not yet all things put under him.*" Heb. ii. 8.

All things were subject to his control, *even on earth;* and they cannot be less so, now he is exalted to heaven, to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; and yet many years after his ascension, the apostle says, "But now we see not *yet* all things put under him;" by which he must certainly mean their being *willingly subject* unto him; for, in all other senses, all things are *now* put under him, in the most unlimited manner, as we have seen already. But the apostle goes on to tell how far the important work is accomplished, and that a sure foundation is laid for its entire completion; saying, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for ALL;" (for so the word *pantos* ought to be rendered.) There was anciently a manuscript in use, in which the words were *choris Theou* instead of *chariti Theou*, that is, *for all* EXCEPT GOD. And there is a little doubt of its being the true sense; because St. Paul makes the same exception, with respect to those who are put under Christ, as we have before noted, 1 Cor. xv. 27.

Then the apostle adds, "For it became him, for whom are *all things*, and by whom are *all things*, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. ii. 9, 10.

Instead of the word *all* intending only *a part*, we find in several places, that the word *many* intends *all*, as in Rom. v. 15, 16, 19. "For if through the offence of one, *many* be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto *many*. The free gift is of *many* offences unto justification. For, as by one man's disobedience *many* were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall *many* be made righteous." Isaiah liii. 11, 12. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify *many* (or *the* many) for he shall bear their iniquities. And he bare the sins of *many* and made intercession for the transgressors." These *many* are called *all*, in the 6th verse. "*All* we, like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and JEHOVAH hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all*."

But to return to our subject: St. Paul assures us, that though *all things*, without exception, are put under him, in one sense, yet, in another, he says, "But now we see not yet *all things* put under him." But he leaves us not in the dark about the matter; but speaks of that effectual "working, whereby he is able even to subdue *all things* unto himself." Phil. iii. 21. And when *all things* shall be subdued unto himself, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put *all things* under him, that God may be ALL in ALL." 1 Cor. xvi. 28. Here we plainly find, a very necessary distinction between all things being put under him; and all things being subdued unto him, the former is already done in the fullest manner; and the latter shall be as perfectly and fully accomplished in due time: "Because the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, until now," Rom. viii. 21, 22.

Though what hath already been spoken, may seem more than enough to prove the point respecting the word *all;* yet there is one passage more, full to the purpose, that I would not omit; it being of itself, fully sufficient to settle the dispute forever:—The apostle, speaking of Christ saith, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature; for by him were *all things* created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; *all things* were created by him, and for him; and he is before *all things*, and by him *all things* consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in *all things* he might have the pre-eminence.—For it pleased the Father, that in him should *all* fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him, to reconcile *all things* unto himself; by him, I say whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Col. i. 15, 20,

As the word *all* is generally acknowledged to be used in its most extensive sense, in every place in this paragraph, except the last, there is no reason to be given why the apostle should change the sense of the word, without giving us the least notice of it; and, indeed, it would be very unkind, if not unfair, for him thus to do; as it would tend to mislead us in a matter of very great importance.

Friend.—I hope I am not so attached to my own opinions as to be unwilling to hear and consider what may be advanced against them; but the doctrine of *endless damnation* has been so generally considered as a most important article of faith by all denominations, that I can by no means think of giving it up, unless you are able to establish the contrary system upon the most solid ground, and answer all the scriptural objections fairly, that have been, or that can be brought against it; for I must have all my doubts solved, before I can think of believing such a strange doctrine as this appears to me.

Minister.—I must heartily commend your prudence and sincerity. I took the same resolution; and would never receive this view, till I could answer all objections to my own satisfaction; and if you are disposed to inquire farther at another opportunity, I shall be happy in giving you all the assistance in my power.

CONTENTS OF DIALOGUE II.

OBJECTION.—Of the worm that dieth not, and the unquenchable fire, five times threatened by o Lord Jesus Christ in one passage.

ANSWERED.—By reference to the words in the prophesy of Isaiah, to which our Lord probab alluded. Passages from the prophets brought to shew a literal accomplishment of the original word The dreadful threatenings of future misery to the wicked, implied in those words of our Savio They shall be publicly punished and tormented in the lake of fire, which is the earth in its melted dissolved state. Nevertheless, there shall be a new creation of the earth, and so the lake of fire sh cease. Many instances of fires mentioned in Scripture, of which it was said, *they shall not be quenche* which yet have ceased long ago. And of those fires whose smoke is said to ascend up *forever*. Thin contrary are often predicted of the same places and people, and must be understood as occurring different times. Our Lord's words of every one being *salted with fire* considered.

OBJECTION.—All the fires above mentioned were on earth, and in time; but the fire of hell, bei in eternity, can never go out, or cease to burn to all endless duration.

ANSWER.—Those fires on earth that were *never to be quenched* did not continue to burn as long the earth remained; and therefore there is no necessity of granting that the fire of hell shall burn all eternity. Punishments belong only to the ages of ages before Christ shall have delivered up t kingdom to the Father.

OBJECTION.—The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, &c.

ANSWERED.—1. By shewing what this sin is, &c. 2. All that bears the name of *death* shall destroyed, and all sorrow, crying, and pain, shall cease and be no more. 3. Where sin abound grace shall much more abound.

OBJECTION.—The deplorable case of Esau.

ANSWER.—He lost the birthright, and the peculiar privileges that belonged to the first born, b yet he had a blessing from his father of a lower degree. The great difference between them was mo fulfilled in their posterity than in their own persons. Love and hatred are sometimes only compar tive, and not positive terms, and only imply a preference of one to the other.

OBJECTION.—The great gulph between the region of happiness and misery is impassable.

ANSWER.—Christ has passed it when he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who we disobedient in the days of Noah. This proves a state of conscious existence after the death of t body. The rich man seems to have had compassion towards his brethren. The scriptures constant hold out punishment in proportion to the sins committed in the present life.

OBJECTION.—The case of Judas, of whom Jesus said, "Good were it for that man that he h never been born."

ANSWER.—1. This was a proverbial saying. 2. Both Job and Jeremiah cursed the day of their birt and wished that they had never been born. 3. Solomon declares an untimely birth to be bett than the longest and most prosperous life of one whose soul is not filled with good, and who ha no burial. 4. If Judas had died before he was born he would have escaped all earthly trouble, a future misery, and would have been immediately happy. 5. The Jews as much rejected and doom ed to woe as Judas.

DIALOGUE II.

Friend.—Good day to you, sir, I was just passing by, and if you have a little time to spare, I should be happy to have some further discourse with you, respecting your sentiments; for although I cannot fall in with your views, yet I am convinced, that your mind is upright in the matter, and that you do not disagree with your brethren for the sake of differing, but for what you believe to be truth.

Minister.—I have this to say, (and I can with truth declare it) that I never should have dissented from my brethren, had they only given me the liberty of enjoying the natural right of freely thinking for myself in matters of religion. I sincerely wish to live and die in unity with all that love God and keep his commandments; and I should never have troubled the world with my sentiments, had not great pains been taken to represent me as a heretic, and my sentiments dangerous to mankind; this was done to prevent people from hearing what I had to say in other matters.—I was therefore in a sort, compelled to sit down and answer all the objections that were brought against the truth I believed; which answers drawn (as I trust) fairly fro the Scriptures, have satisfied many who hav read what I then wrote upon the subject.

Friend.—I never saw your answers to ol jections in print; but in our last conversatio you gave such answers to many questions, a to convince me that much more might be sai in favour of the general Restoration than formerly imagined: but I have a number o objections remaining, which appear to me ur answerable; and which I beg leave to stat in the plainest manner.

Minister.—Do, my dear friend; you wil give me pleasure by being free and open upo this subject; propose all your objections i the strongest manner possible, and I will giv you such answers as have satisfied me in th matter; and I beg leave to assure you, tha no light, trifling, or forced answer, far less manifest evasion, would satisfy my mind upo this awful and interesting subject; and i what I believe is not capable of a scriptura defence, I shall endeavour to quit the groun as speedily as possible.

Friend.—The word of our Saviour, recorde

by St. Mark, ix. 43–49, forms a very serious, and to me an unanswerable objection against the Universal Restoration.

"And if thy hand offend thee (*or* cause thee to offend) cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell; into the fire that never shall be quenched (*or* that is unquenchable;) where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee (*or* cause thee to offend) cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into that fire that never shall be quenched (*or* that is unquenchable;) where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee (*or* cause thee to offend) pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt."

Here our Lord repeats five times, that "the fire is not, or never shall be quenched, or is unquenchable; words of near similar meaning; three times he speaks of hell, as a *place* where "their worm dieth not;" and to shew the propriety of the sufferengs of the miserable, he says "For every one shall be salted with fire;" i. e. preserved by the fire, as salt preserves meat. These are the objections from this passage, briefly stated: are you able to answer them fairly, without any evasion, from the authority of Scripture.

Minister.—This is certainly a most terrible passage, and deserves to be considered particularly.

There is no doubt but that Jesus Christ had his eye upon that passage in Isaiah lxvi. 24. —"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

It will be of no use for us to understand when this prophecy shall be fulfilled: It shall be when the children of Israel shall return, and be settled in their own land; and their enemies shall come against them, and shall be destroyed, and their carcasses shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, and shall be a prey to the fowls of heaven, and their flesh shall be devoured by worms, which shall not die, till they have eaten and entirely destroyed their bodies.

"Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee; I will give thee to the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field; for I have spoken it, saith Adonia Jehovah. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea; and it shall stop the noses of the passengers; and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude, and they shall call it the valley of Hammon Gog. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them that they may cleanse the land."—(See Ezek. xxxix. 4, 5, 11, 12.) "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up, from year to year, to worship the King, Jehovah, of Hosts and to keep the feasts of Tabernacles." Zech. xiv. 16. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah." Isaiah lxvi. 21. "And they that shall come up to Jerusalem, to worship the Lord, during the time that these bodies shall lie in the open field, shall go forth, and behold them in a state of putrefaction, a prey to worms; and all the nations of the earth shall see God's judgments executed upon those who dare rebel against him, by making war against the Lamb, and against his army." Rev. xvii. 14, xix. 19.

It is also intimated by Ezekiel, that a fire shall be kindled, to burn their weapons of war, &c., which shall last for some time. Hear his words: "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves and the spears: so they shall burn them with fire seven years; so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire." See Ezek. xxxix. 9, 10.

Thus have I endeavoured to give the plain sense of the text to which our Lord alluded; and I have not the smallest doubt of its being hereafter literally fulfilled.

I will now endeavour to give what appears to me the meaning of the text before us:—Christ threatened that those who would not deny themselves, and cut off those things that led them into sin, should hereafter suffer infinitely greater inconveniences, by being cast into hell fire. And, oh! who can conceive how dreadful a portion is threatened to some transgressors! that they "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation! and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:—And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up ages of ages; and they have no rest day nor night." Rev. xiv. 10. 11.

Thus, as the enemies of God, who shall be destroyed near Jerusalem, shall have their carcasses exposed, full of worms, and be an abhorring unto all that behold them; so those who are cast into the burning lake, shall be publicly exposed to shame, and shall suffer openly for their crimes; and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up *continually*, during those ages that the lake of fire, or the second death shall continue.

But when I consider that this terraqueous globe itself is probably to become the lake of fire, when the elements shall melt with

fervent heat; and yet after that dreadful scene is past, the earth itself shall be renewed, and become the habitation of righteousness; I can hardly have any doubts, but all the rational part of the creation, "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." See Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21, 22.

Thus, if the lake of fire, or second death itself, shall be destroyed, shall cease, and be no more;—there is an *end* to *tormenting pain*; though, perhaps, such *inward reflections*, shall continue for some time longer, (if not to eternity) which, though they shall tend exceedingly to increase the love of God in the souls thus delivered, shall fill them with shame similar, or perhaps more pungent than we feel here on earth, when we are melted under a deep sense of our manifold transgressions, and of the pardoning love of God at the same time. This seems to me to be the meaning of such passages as these:

"O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth the wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: that—(our translators have added the word *men*, but the sense determines that the addition should be) —*they* may know that thou whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth." Psal. lxxxiii. 13, 18.

"The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools." Prov. iii. 35.

"They shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten." Jer. xx. 11, xxxiii. 40.

"They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them; they shall go to confusion together, that are makers of idols." Isa. xlv. 16. "And all that are incensed against him, (JEHOVAH) shall be ashamed."—verse 24.

"For thus saith the Adonia JEHOVAH; I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger (*viz.*, Samaria and Sodom;)—and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by the covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am JEHOVAH: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, saith Adonia JEHOVAH." Ezek. xvi. 59, 63.

"Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations Not for your sakes do I this, saith Adonia JEHOVAH, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded, O house of Israel."—Ezek xxxvi. 31, 32.

But the lake of fire shall go out, when all the purposes for which it shall be kindled are accomplished; and if so, then it follows of course, that intelligences shall be no longer tormented therein.

Friend.—But when God says; that a fire shall not be quenched, does it not necessarily imply, that it shall never cease burning?

Minister.—By no means; for we read in several places of Scripture of fires that have ceased, ages ago, that were spoken of in as strong terms as are used by Christ, respecting the fire of hell.

As for instance: in Lev. vi. 13, we read "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall *never* go out." This is a much stronger expression than if it had been said, "It shall not be quenched;" for it is said, "*It shall never go out.*" But surely, it must be used with some limitation; for we know that it hath ceased ages ago. And we read, that Daniel prophesied of the Messiah, that he should "cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." Dan. ix. 27; but it would certainly have been a weak argument against Daniel's prophecy, that as Moses had said, the fire should never go out upon the altar, therefore the Messiah could never cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; but it would be just as good an argument against Daniel's prophecy, as the words of Christ are against Isaiah's: "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return. That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.—Surely shall say, in JEHOVAH have I righteousness and strength; to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." Isaiah lvii. 16, xlv. 23, 24.

In Jer. xvii. 27, we read: "But if you will not hearken unto me, &c., then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and *it shall not be quenched.*" See also chap. iv. 4, xxi. 12, Amos v. 6, 2 Kings xxii. 17.

Similar threatenings we find positively pronounced by Ezekiel, at the command of God. Moreover the word of JEHOVAH came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face towards the south, and drop thy words towards the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field, and say to the forest of the south, hear the word of JEHOVAH; thus saith Adonia JEHOVAH, behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree; the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north, shall be burnt therein; and all flesh shall see that I JEHOVAH have kindled it; *it shall not be quenched.*" Ezek. xx. 42, 46, 47, 48. See also Jer. vii. 20.

Now these threatenings were surely executed; for the people did not hearken to God, he did certainly kindle a fire, and it burnt, and was not quenched, but consumed Jerusalem and all her palaces; and the beautiful forests that were so much esteemed, shared the same fate. But what person will argue, that the whole city and country must be now in flames; and must have been consuming, from the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, because of these expressions, "The flaming flames shall not be quenched," &c., since we know that Jerusalem, and the country round about, have been since inhabited, and will be again in a more glorious manner than ever?

Neither will it help the matter to say, that we must understand the fire *figuratively*, for the angel of God, &c., for he declares by Zechariah, after the seventy years captivity, that he was "returned to Jerusalem *with mercies*." See Zach. i. 16. And though the present desolation of that land is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim. Deut. xxix. 23, 28. And Ezekiel not only speaks of it as desolate and waste, but as having been always so; though we know that it was formerly filled with inhabitants. (See Ezek. xxxvi. 34, 35, xxxviii. 8.) Yet all the Prophets speak of a time to come, when it shall be much more flourishing than it hath ever been: and Isaiah says, "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken; neither shall thy land be termed desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah (*my delight is in her*) and thy land Bulah (*married*) for JEHOVAH delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." Isaiah lx. 15, lxii. 4.

Thus we may see, by these and many other passages that predictions apparently directly contrary the one to the other, may all be fulfilled upon the same land, people and persons, only allowing a proper time to each, without which we can never make sense of many prophesies.

Isaiah, speaking of the land of Bozrah, says, "And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch and the dust thereof into brimstone; and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched, night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it, for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it;" (birds that cannot live in fire, pitch, and brimstone, any better than men.) "And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be an habitation for dragons and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.—There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch, and gather under her shadow; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with his mate.—Seek ye out of the book of JEHOVAH, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line; they shall possess it forever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein." Isaiah xxxiv. 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Now, in this passage, there are such things spoken of as are impossible to be fulfilled at once, without as great a miracle as was wrought for the three children in the furnace; and which there is no reason to expect will be wrought in favour of cormorants, bitterns, owls, ravens, dragons, satyrs, wild beasts, thorns, nettles and brambles. In the 10th verse we read of a period called *for ever*; wherein this land is to be on fire and is not to be quenched, night nor day: and the smoke of it is to ascend up *for ever*: but in the 17th verse it is said, that the before mentioned birds and beasts shall possess it *for ever*, even from generation to generation shall they dwell therein. But one of these periods must end before the other can begin; the fire must cease to burn, and the smoke to ascend, before beasts can take up their constant dwelling there, and birds can lay and hatch, and gather their young ones under their shadow, and enjoy the society of their mates. And thus the whole prophecy may be fulfilled; not in the *same*, but in *different* periods, and thus also, may all the threatenings and all the promises in the sacred book be accomplished; not at once, but each in their season.

It appears evident that our Lord, by alluding to a fire that shall burn on earth, and to worms that shall devour the flesh of the slain, could not mean to prove the torments of men to be absolutely *endless*; at least, the expressions of the *worm* that *dieth not*, and *the fire* that *is not quenched*, do not *necessarily* imply it; which has been sufficiently proved, by the passages where the same or similar expressions are used, where yet the subject cannot intend *endless* duration; and this is all that can be necessary to prove at present.

As to the expression of being *salted with fire*, as *every sacrifice was salted with salt*; I am not so clear, what might have been our Saviour's intent in this expression; but I think, in the first place, he intended to teach us, that they should not be *annihilated* by the fire, but *preserved* therein, to be tormented day and night, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, during the ages of ages. I would also propose, whether our Lord did not mean to intimate, that even the fire itself shall be of use under his direction, to humble, subdue, and penetrate the stubborn and disobedient rebels that shall be cast into it. *Fire*, as well as *salt*, is a great purifier; and preserves and cleanses those things which are able to endure it; and is the great agent by which all metals are separated

from their dross, and prepared for the use for which they were designed. Under the law, all unclean things, that could endure the fire, were ordered to be cast into it, in order to their cleansing.

Friend.—What you have said concerning the fires that are represented as unquenchable, in several passages of Scripture, is worthy of attention; but you should consider, that these fires were all on earth, and in time, and therefore must have an end, or cease to burn; but the fire of hell is in eternity, and therefore must last as long as eternity shall endure. Pray, what can you say to this?

Minister.—Had those *unquenchable* fires never gone out while earth endured, or while time lasted, there might have been some force in this argument; but since the continuance of the fire does not depend upon the *season* in which it is kindled, but upon the *combustibles* that feed and support it, this can be no objection: therefore since these unquenchable fires that have been mentioned, were kindled on earth, and yet not burn while earth lasted, but have gone out long ago; there is no necessity of granting (even though we should admit your premises of the fire of hell being kindled in eternity) that the unquenchable fire of the burning lake *must* unavoidably burn to *all eternity* merely because it is supposed to belong to that state: but if punishments only belong to those ages before Christ shall resign the kingdom to the Father, and the lake of fire shall be this terraqueous globe, dissolved or melted with fervent heat; then the ground is changed, and the whole objection vanishes of course.

Friend.—As you have come over this objection better than I expected you could, I shall leave it for the present, and consider more fully, when I am by myself, what you have said on this subject; and shall now propose the greatest objection that can be brought against the Restoration of all men, from the Scriptures; and which, if you can fairly answer, I shall be almost persuaded to believe with you; but I am persuaded that you will be hard put to it.

Minister.—Produce your cause, and bring forth your strong reasons, that we may hear them; and if I am silenced, I will not be ashamed to acknowledge it with all my heart.

Friend.—I shall bring my objection from the Scriptures, and state it with the utmost precision that I am able: It is the sin against the Holy Ghost, of which our Saviour speaks in the most awful manner; saying, "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall (*or* may) be forgiven him;—but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world (*or* age) neither in the world (*or* age) to come. Verily, I say unto you, all sins shall (*or* may) be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, (*or* hath not forgiveness to the age) but is in danger of eternal damnation." St. Matth. xii. 31, 32. St. Mark iii. 28, 29. This is such a matter of importance, that three of the Evangelists notice it. St. Luke hath it thus: "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall (*or* may) be forgiven him;—but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." St. Luke xii. 10. St. Matthew saith, this sin shall not be forgiven in this world, nor in that to come; St. Mark, that such an one hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation; and St. Luke positively saith, it shall not be forgiven: and to confirm the matter still more, if possible, St. Paul saith, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, (*or*, and have fallen away) to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy by the mouth of two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was santified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, x. 26, 27, 28, 29. And the same Apostle directs us, saying; "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: lest there be any fornicator or profane persons, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right. For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Hebrews xii. 15, 16, 17.

And St. John, the beloved disciple, says; "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." 1 John v. 16.

Now there is a sin for which there is no forgiveness, neither in this world (*or age*) or in that to come; which shall not be forgiven at all; he that committeth it hath never forgiveness, is in danger of eternal damnation; he cannot be renewed again to repentance; because he hath crucified Christ to himself and put him to an open shame; having sinned wilfully and maliciously, after receiving the knowledge of the truth; to such no more

sacrifice for sin remaineth; judgment and fiery indignation are his certain portion, he is an adversary, and must be devoured; a sorer punishment than death without mercy awaits him, of which he is worthy, for that he hath trodden under foot the Son of God, the only Saviour, and hath counted the precious blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, and which alone is able to cleanse from sin, an unholy thing; and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace, which is alone able to renew the heart, and therefore the case of such must be desperate; for if such an one like Esau, should wish to repent and gain what he had lost, it could not be, for he would find no place for repentance, though he might seek it carefully with tears; for having committed the sin unto death, for which no prayer is to be made, no intercession offered up, he is bound over to the second death, the lake of fire and brimstone, and must bear the punishment of his sins for ever and ever!!! What say you to this?

Minister.—As when Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel his dream, he was astonished for one hour at the greatness of the punishment which he saw would inevitably come upon the King: much more must all those be, who read and consider these dreadful threatenings which must surely come upon all those who have sinned in the manner described! I shall make a few observations upon these most terrible passages of Scripture; partly to prevent feeble minds from falling into dispair, that may see them collected into one striking view; partly to cure proud minds of presumption; and partly to shew that the doctrine of the Restoration may be defended, notwithstanding.

1. We are sure that the Scribes and Pharisees of our Saviour's time, who blasphemously ascribed his miracles to the power of the devil, did, in the most direct and undeniable manner, commit that sin, and some are doubtful whether it can be committed by any in these days.

2. It is generally aknowledged that the Hebrews were in danger of committing that sin, by openly and wilfully apostatizing from Christianity, and publicly renouncing Christ and his salvation, and blaspheming against the Holy Ghost after having been partakers of its extraordinary gifts.

3. It cannot be committed by ignorant persons, nor without a considerable degree of malice propense; light in the understanding, and malice in the heart, are necessary ingredients of this dreadful crime; and it appears to me, it must be committed openly, and that it cannot be committed in thought only.

4. Under the Levitical dispensation there were many unpardonable sins—crimes that could not be overlooked, and for which no atonement could be made, and which were punished with death, without mercy; other crimes, unless sacrifice were offered, and repentance took place, subjected the parties to death also: but under the gospel, there is but one crime that is properly unpardonable, and that absolutely subjects the person guilty of it to the second death; yet many other sins are threatened with the same punishment conditionally, but they may be forgiven, and not punished at all; but this one must as certainly be punished with the second death, as murder or any other crime, was by the law of Moses punished with the death of the body without mercy or forgiveness. *Forgery* is the unpardonable sin of England: people frequently suffer death for other crimes than this; but other offences are sometimes forgiven, but this never; it is always punished with death. This circumstance may illustrate my meaning. The sin against the Holy Ghost is an offence of that kind, that, either owing to its uncommon malignity (as is most likely) or some other cause, exposes the guilty persons to the age of judgment, from which he cannot escape by repentance, pardon, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ as other sinners may: neither can he be at present born of the Spirit, to which he hath done despite; nor can he be reclaimed by any possible means, in this age, or in the age that is to succeed this, but is inevitably bound over to suffer the inconceivable torments of the second death, or lake of fire and brimstone after the day of judgment.

5. There is no kind of dispute between us respecting the certainty of the punishment of such; in this we both agree: He that sinneth against the Holy Ghost, is in danger of eternal damnation, or judgment, or the second death. The question is, shall there ever come a time when the second death, or lake of fire shall no more exist? If this can be proved, the conclusion will be evident, viz.: That no one shall remain under the power thereof to all eternity: Upon this, and this alone, depends the solution of this awful, interesting, and most important question; and I consider all other answers as mere quibbles, compared with this. And if it cannot be proved that a time will come when all that bears the name of death shall be destroyed, those who commit the sin unto death, must at least be allowed to stand as exceptions to the general rule; and I am apt to think, the rule itself will be overthrown. I shall therefore labour this point a little; and if I should be so happy as to prove to your satisfaction the total destruction of death, it will answer many other objections as well as this. My only refuge is scripture; if this fails me, I shall not presume to pursue the subject farther.

Isa. xxv. 8. "He will swallow up *Death* in victory; and Adonai Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces." Hos. xiii. 14. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, (*or* hell) I will be thy destruction. Repentence shall be hid from mine eyes." 1 Cor. xv. 26. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is *Death*"—or rather, as the words may more properly be arranged, "*Death*," the last enemy, shall be destroyed." The second death is in-

finitely more the enemy of man than the first, and may therefore be considered as an enemy which God will destroy.

Now, if the last enemy shall be destroyed, there will not be one left.

But the first is true; therefore also the last. As, would it not be highly absurd to say, that, although the very last enemy shall be destroyed, yet, many millions shall remain to all eternity?

Verse 56. "The sting of *Death* is sin." While sin remains in existence, death will be able to show its sting; but the time will come when death shall have no sting to boast of; therefore sin, and consequently death of every kind, shall be destroyed. 1 John iii. 3. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Unless Christ finally destroys the works of the devil, even all sin out of the universe, his purpose must be eternally frustrated.

But the last can never be; therefore the first is true.

Heb. ii. 14. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil."—Now what death has the devil power over? The death of the body? Or that of the soul, which consists in enmity against God, and separation from him? "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 6, 7. If this death with the consequence of it, is that which the devil hath the power of, then must this death be destroyed.

But, I think, the first is true; therefore also the last.

Rev. xxi. 4. We read, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more *Death*, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Here is a state spoken of beyond all death; a state wherein, sorrow, crying, and pain shall be no more. This state is cotemporary with the new heaven and earth, after the lake of fire hath ceased.

Friend.—We have always understood this passage to relate to the death of the body, and even to the death of the righteous only; but making this state cotemporary with the new heavens and earth, seems to throw new light upon the subject.

Minister.—Most certainly the word *Death* here implies the second death; for we are informed, in the foregoing chapter, of the first resurrection even that of the martyrs who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God; and such as had not worshipped the beast and his image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands; then we read of a thousand years between this resurrection, and the rest of the dead liv ing again; after this, we find, that the dead small and great, stood before God, and wer judged; and such as were not found writte in the book of life, were cast into the lake o fire, which is expressly called "the secon death;" which as before observed is probabl the earth in its melted state. In this chapte we find, that all things are to be made new and *Death* is to be no more, neither sorrow nor crying, neither any more pain. But thi must be the second death, or lake of fire for the resurrection of all the bodies, both o the just and the unjust, had been spoken o before.

Thus, as all sin, and all that bear th name of death shall be entirely destroyed a last; the doctrine of endless misery seem to fall to the ground, or at least cannot b certainly proved from scripture, but rather th contrary.

The time must come when all things shal be subject to Christ, when he shall destro death, the last enemy, by destroying sin whic is the sting of death, so this dreadful sin, a well as others, shall be no more. For if thi was not to be the case, it never could be true that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;" for it never would abound quite so much; neither would death and hel be silent when God should ask the great questions, "O death where is thy sting? O grave (*or* hell) where is thy victory?" for death could say, here is my sting, that sin against the Holy Ghost, which must endure to al eternity, and which even divine grace shall never destroy; I have, therefore, the victory and dominion over these sinners who have committed it, and will hold it while God himself exists. Then death could never be destroyed, nor swallowed up in victory; neither would sorrow, crying, and pain cease; neither could God ever be ALL IN ALL, in any other sense, with respect to them, than he is now; nor would every tongue swear; neithe would all things wholly be made new; no all the former things ever pass away! Neithe could the universal chorus of praise ever be sung by every creature, in heaven, or earth, and under the earth, and throughout God's wide domain; and, finally many Scriptures would never seem to be fulfilled, in the fullest sense. Rom. v. 20, 21. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death; even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, if grace shall abound more than sin, it shall be as universal and more powerful. But the first is true therefore also the last. If grace shall be as extensive as sin, and more powerful, all who have sinned shall be restored; but the first is true; therefore also the last.

What consequences must follow from the supposition, that some of God's creatures shall always remain his enemies! Either God created some to be miserable to endless ages, or

must be frustrated eternally in his designs, or all must be restored at last, and made happy by love and free love.

The first is blasphemous, the second is dishonourable to God; therefore, the third must be true: for I cannot think of a fourth conclusion.

Friend.—What do you think of the deplorable case of Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright; and afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully, with tears?

Minister.—He certainly lost, or rather sold his birthright; in consequence of which, he lost the blessing belonging to the firstborn: but lest any should be led to conclude from this, that poor *Esau* had no blessings at all, the same apostle informs us, that, "By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come." Heb. xi. 20. By this we find, he was blessed as well as Jacob; but in a less degree.

Friend.—Do we not read, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated?" Rom. ix. 13, Mal. i. 2, 3.

Minister.—Yes, most certainly: but then this love and hatred, so called, were manifested to their posterity, and not to their persons, in the manner described by the prophet; "I have loved you, saith JEHOVAH; yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah; yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness." This manifestation of hatred did not affect the eternal state of their souls, but their condition in this world. God declared, that Jacob's seed should exist as a distinct people to the end of time, but that Esau's should not; and this difference is evident; for the remains of Esau's seed were, in the days of the Maccabees, incorporated with the seed of Jacob, and existed no more for ever, as a nation by themselves. From Jacob's race the Messiah was to come, and all nations were to be blessed in the seed of Israel. In all these instances, and in many others, there was a manifest preference of Jacob to Esau, but nothing like positive hatred can be intended.

Christ says, (St. Luke xiv. 26) "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." But we cannot suppose our Lord intended positive, but comparative hatred; according to St. Matthew, x. 37. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me."

Friend.—What you have said upon this subject appears to have some weight, and I will consider it more fully hereafter; but I must beg leave to ask you, how you get over that great gulph which is placed between the regions of *Paradise* and *Gehenna*, of which Abraham speaks to the rich man; saying, and besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Does not this imply the absolute impossibility of the rich man's being ever restored?

Minister.—You have asked me many questions; give me leave to ask you one. Do you believe, that Jesus of Nazareth was able to pass that impassable gulph?

Friend.—Indeed, that is a question I never heard proposed before; and which I am not prepared to answer, without farther consideration. Pray be so kind as to give an answer yourself, and tell me what you think of it.

Minister.—I believe, that with man it is impossible; but with God all things are possible. And I believe, that Jesus Christ was not only able to pass, but that he actually did pass that gulph, which was impassable to all men, but not to him. And he assures St. John, that he had passed it, and not only so, but that he had the keys of the same in his possession; for he saith, "Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and death." And St. Peter informs us, that "Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us unto God;) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison; who sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited, in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." And he also tells us, that we "shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead," (in distinction from them that are quick) "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." See Rev. i. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20. iv. 5, 6.

Friend.—You know, the common opinion is, that the Spirit of God, in Noah, preached unto the inhabitants of the old world; who, in St. Peter's time, were shut up in the prison of hell. But I must confess, it appears to me a very dark text.

Minister.—If you only observe how particular the expressions are in these texts, I think it will soon appear that not the Spirit of God in Noah, but the spirit, or soul, of Christ in its disembodied state, is here intended. His body was doubtless quickened by his soul, or spirit, coming into it again: was it not?

Friend.—It seems most reasonable to believe it was.

Minister.—Then observe the next words, he went; here the idea of a journey to a distant place is intimated, the original word being expressive of an actual passage from one place to another, and is the same that is used in verse 22, for the ascension of Christ into heaven; so that he appears to have gone into the prison in the same proper sense, as he afterwards went into heaven. He actually journied to

the place of confinement, *and preached to the spirits, &c.* He preached the gospel, no doubt, not to men in the body, but to the spirits, to those in a disembodied state; not only so, but to the spirits in prison. Had they not been in prison, Christ would not have gone into the prison to preach to them. But, who were these spirits?—St. Peter informs us that they were those who were sometime disobedient; but this expression intimates that the time is perfectly past; as, "Ye were the servants of sin; for when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." Rom. vi. 17, 20. St. Peter tells us when they were disobedient; when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. Here he evidently distinguishes the two periods of their visitation; one is called the preaching of Christ, by his spirit, after he was put to death in the flesh; and the other is called the long suffering of God, which waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. The long suffering of God waited upon them, before they were drowned, while the ark was building; but Christ preached to them when they were spirits in prison. They were disobedient to God's long suffering; but it is not certain that they were so when Christ preached to them; but the contrary is intimated in these words: for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, &c. This cannot intend those that are spiritually dead only, but those whose bodies are dead; because we here find the dead set in opposition to the quick, or those whose bodies are alive, and not those that are spiritually alive; for we may observe, that whenever the words quick and dead occur, by quick, we always understand those whose bodies are alive; and by dead, those who have ceased to exist here.

Acts x. 40, &c. St. Peter, in his sermon to Cornelius and his family, informed them of Jesus, who was slain, whom "God raised from the dead, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses, chosen before God; even to us, who did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is he who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead." And St. Paul says to Timothy, "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; preach the word," &c. See 2 Tim. iv. 1. So in 1 Pet. iv. 5, the words quick and dead are used in the same manner; and then immediately, while the idea is warm in our minds, the apostle gives us the reasons why the gospel was preached to the dead, (*or* the spirits in prison) of which he had before informed us, and now repeats again, and assures us, that it was, that they might be judged according to men, in the flesh; or as though they had heard it while they were alive in the flesh; but also, that they might live according to God, in the spirit. The gospel not only was, but is, preached to them that are dead, in a moral or a spiritual sense It need not have been said; For, for thi cause was the gospel preached also to ther that are dead, if only the spiritually dead ar intended; for it is rarely preached to an other but such. Why should it be said, tha they might be judged according to men in th flesh, if they were men in the flesh at th time when it was preached to them?

This passage proves the existence of th soul after the death of the body; for unles the soul of the antediluvians existed after th drowning of their bodies, Christ could nc have preached to them in prison. But th dead being opposed to the quick in this pa sage sufficiently, and even incontestibly, de termines the sense.

With a little attention, we may easily be cor vinced, that Christ was not only designed t be a covenant of the people, (meaning th Jews) and a light to the gentiles; which tw descriptions comprehend all the living; bu also, to bring out the prisoners from prisor and them that sit in darkness, out of the pr son house; which (if it be not a repetition must intend the dead, as all the living wer mentioned before.

"And he said, it is a light thing that tho shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribe of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles that thou mayest be my salvation unto th end of the earth. Thus saith JEHOVAH, i an acceptable time have I heard thee, and i a day of salvation have I helped thee; and will preserve thee, and give thee for a cove nant of the people, to establish the earth, t cause to inherit the desolate heritages." Thu far the Redeemer's work seems limited to th earth, and respects the living. But the pro phet goes much farther, and says, "That tho mayest say to the prisoners, go forth, to ther that are in darkness, shew yourselves; the shall feed in the ways, and their pasture shall be in all high places. They shall nc hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nc sun smite them; for he that hath mercy upo them shall lead them, even by the springs c water shall he guide them." See Isaia xlii. 6. 7, xlix. 6, 8, 9, 10. Compared wit Rev. vii. 14, 15, 16, 17. The words of th Saviour, as described by the elegant pen o Isaiah, (chap. lxi. 1, 2, 3) seem to comprehen a great variety of particulars; all which he hat performed already, or shall execute in due tim "The Spirit of Adonia JEHOVAH is upon me; b cause JEHOVAH hath anointed me, (1) to preac good tidings to the meek: (2) He hath sent m to bind up the broken hearted; (3) to proclai liberty to the captives, (4) and the opening o the prison to them that are bound: (5) t proclaim the acceptable year of JEHOVAH, (6 and the day of vengeance of our God: (7) t comfort all that mourn: (8) To appoint unt them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them *First*, beauty for ashes; *Secondly*, the oil o joy for mourning; *Thirdly*, the garment o praise for the spirit of heaviness; that the might be called *First*, Trees of righteousness

Secondly, The planting of JEHOVAH, (*and* ALL *for this end*)—that he might be glorified."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, by his process, hath laid a foundation for the recovery of all men. "For to this end Christ both died, rose, and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living." Rom. xiv. 9.—He passed through all our states, that he might redeem us. He came down from heaven—he was conceived in the womb of Mary—he was born of her—he lived in the world unknown—he sympathized with us in our sorrows—he bare our sins in his own body, on the tree—he was buried—he descended into *Hades*—he arose—ascendeth—sitteth at the right hand of God—and maketh continual intercession for us.

It seemed necessary that Christ should visit men in all situations, that he might redeem them.—The apostle informs us, saying, "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb. ii. 14, 15. It was not only necessary that he should die, to vanquish death, and to redeem us from its power; but it was equally needful for him to go into those places, where spirits were confined in the regions of darkness, that he might gain universal dominion, spoil principalities, and redeem the captives whom he had bought with his blood, in order that he might ascend up to heaven, and open to his followers the gates of eternal life.

"Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.—Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." Eph. iv. 8, 9, 10. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Col. ii. 15.

Thus our Saviour by his divine process, hath obtained a right to open the prison doors, and let the captives go free; and though the rich man was in torments where he could not get a drop of water to cool his tongue, and had *judgment without mercy* because he had *shewed no mercy*; yet it is possible that, by the blood of the covenant, he may be sent forth out of the pit where there is no water. See Zech. ix. 11. The Lord Jesus is able to take the prey from the mighty and to deliver the lawful captive. Isa. xlix. 24.

"Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction, and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High; therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help." This evidenty points out the deplorably miserable state of sinners cut off in their sins; having rebelled against God's words, and contemned his counsels; for which reason he hath shut them up in darkness, and in the shadow of death; in such a situation that no power but his own, can give them the least help, much less *release*. Such circumstances seldom occur in this life; but these words are a lively and affecting description of the miseries of the future state.

"Then they cried unto JEHOVAH in their trouble and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. O that men would praise JEHOVAH for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder." Psal. cvii. 10, 16.

This amazing deliverance seems to be described in such language as corresponds much better with the deliverance of the spirits from their dreadful prison, than any temporal mercies that are bestowed on mankind *here on earth*. "The righteous shall see it and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth: whoso is wise, and will observe those things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of JEHOVAH," ver. 42, 43.

Those who are acquainted with the Divine character, and see his designs of mercy towards his creatures, shall rejoice in the same. They that are wise, shall observe those things, and shall understand his loving kindness; and that "JEHOVAH is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works." Psal. cxlv. 9.

Thus, how impossible soever it might appear to us, that the rich man should ever be delivered, we must remember that "with God nothing shall be impossible." St. Luke i. 37. "Is there any thing too hard for JEHOVAH?" Gen. xviii. 14. "Behold (says he) I am JEHOVAH, the God of all flesh: Is there any thing too hard for me?" Jeremiah xxxii. 27.

Our Saviour says, St. Matth. xix. 24, St. Mark x. 25, St. Luke xviii. 25, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Whether the word here used, intends a camel, or a cable, it certainly implied the greatest difficulty imaginable, even amounting in the view of his disciples, to a natural impossibility, or they would not have been as the evangelist expresses, *exceedingly amazed and astonished out of measure* at his words, "saying among themselves, who then can be saved?" But though Jesus meant to represent the matter as in itself a kind of natural impossibility, and absolutely impossible to men; yet he could not intend thereby, that it never should be accomplished, because he immediately adds, "with men this is impossible; but not with God. For with God all things are possible." St. Mark x. 27. Therefore, though it was impossible for *men* to pass the gulph between *Paradise* and *Gehenna*; yet as we have seen, Christ was able, and therefore as we know not the *ne plus ultra* of his power to save, we cannot positively conclude *against the Restoration*, from this instance of

the rich man, unless we could find some passages of Scripture, where God has promised never to restore or to reconcile such to himself, whom he hath once cast off; the contrary to which, I think, may be proved; but I am at present considering, that, in the nature of things it is not impossible for God to restore the rich man, if he so pleases; and consequently others that are in the same situation.

Behold the rich man in another world. He seems *now* to have much more true benevolence in him than in his lifetime; for when he could not obtain a drop of water for his tongue, he pleads much more earnestly for Lazarus to be sent to his five brethren to testify to them, lest they also should come into the same place of torment with himself. Here he urges the matter most earnestly; and does not seem willing to be denied. This shows him not to have been so lost to virtue as Satan; since he and his angels, though miserable themselves, seek to make all men so too, though their torments are increased thereby.

Add to all this that Abraham called the rich man, "*Son*," and bade him remember that in his lifetime he had his good things; and likewise Lazarus evil things; and that therefore it was but reasonable that the scene should be changed; that Lazarus should be comforted, and he tormented. And I think nothing can be fairly argued from this case in favour of *endless damnation*. For in this case if he was doomed to suffer *while God exists*, there could be no proportion between the sufferings, torments and evil things of Lazarus on earth, and those which *he* endured in hell; whereas it is intimated in the Scriptures, that all things are determined by number, weight and measure. Let us hear what our Lord has said upon the subject. St. Luke xii. 47, 48. "And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with MANY stripes. But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with FEW stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." But what difference so much to be noticed, could there be, if both were to be beaten *to all eternity?* Or how could either be said to have FEW, if there was never to be an end?—Impossible! Rev. xviii. 7. "How much she (Babylon) hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously; so much torment and sorrow give her." All this appears just and reasonable. But to suppose a poor ignorant heathen, or a child of ten years old, will remain in misery as long as the most persecuting tyrant, or apostate Christian, seems to contradict all the ideas we have of justice and equity, as well as of goodness; for in this case, who can suppose that each one is exactly rewarded according to his works? And especially can any think that *mercy* has any hand in a reward, where there is seemingly no proportion? Whereas we read, (Psal. lxii. 12) "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou renderest to every man according to his work."

Friend.—Indeed, I could not have thought that so much could have been said on that side of the case; and though I am not yet, wholly satisfied, I must confess, some of my great difficulties seem to be removed from what you have said; and yet there appears something very dreadful in the account. Pray, do you understand it as a parable?

Minister.—I am most inclined to think it is a piece of real history, known to our Saviour, who was well acquainted with what passed in the spiritual, as well as the natural world; and who intended thereby to give an awful warning to the Pharisees (who were covetous) of the dreadful condition of wicked rich men in the next state; and especially of those who neglect or despise the poor.

Friend.—I am inclined to think with you in this matter; and therefore, without any farther delay, I shall pass to mention another strong objection to the doctrine of the Restoration of all men; *viz.* the instance of *Judas*, of whom our Saviour says, "The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man, if he had not been born. St. Matt. xxvi. 24. St. Mark xiv. 21. If Judas should ever be restored, how could the Saviour say, "Good were it for that man, if he had never been born?" I think you will find it very difficult to remove this objection; for, if he is ever to be happy, (though after many ages) it will be good for him that he was born.

Minister.—I cannot think that this is so strong an argument against the general Restitution, as most that use it imagine. It was a common proverb among the Jews, when any great misfortune happened to a man, or his family, to say, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born." And thus our Saviour used it with great propriety respecting Judas; for who that thinks with any reason at all, would not have wished that he had never been born, rather than to have betrayed the dear Redeemer?

Friend.—But can any thing less than *endless* damnation be sufficient to justify the expression of "Good were it for that man, that he had never been born.

Minister.—I am of opinion that even worldly troubles (short as they are) may sufficiently justify the expression. There are a thousand circumstances into which the children of Adam fall, that make their case infinitely worse than though they had never been born, even without supposing a state of future punishment at all. I had rather, a thousand times, never have been born, than to have betrayed Christ even upon the supposition that I had never been doomed to suffer for it beyond this life. Job, when he had lost his substance, his children, and his ease, opened his mouth, and through excess of grief cursed the day of his birth; though it does not appear that he had any fear of future damnation, but the reverse.

And Job spake, and said, "Let the day perish wherein I was born; and the night in

which it was said, there is a man-child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above; neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of months. Lo! let that night be solitary; let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up in their mourning.—Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day; because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Why did not I give up the ghost, when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or, why the breast that I should suck? For now should I have been still, and been quiet; I should have slept; then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, who built desolate places for themselves; or with princes, that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: or, as an hidden, untimely birth, I had not been; as infants, who never saw light. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master." See Job iii. 2, 19.

From this discourse, it seems, that Job thought it would have been better for him never to have been born than to have fallen into such sore troubles in this present life, without taking the other into his account; but if he had known that he had been doomed to suffer the amazing torments of the second death, in the lake of fire and brimstone, what would he have said? Even upon the supposition that it was only to last for ages, he would have thought that his being born into this world to be fitted for such a punishment, would have been the greatest curse that could have befallen him.

If Job, who could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And, though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. He knoweth the way that I take; and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps; his way have I kept, and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." (See Job xix. 25, 26, 27; xxiii. 10, 11, 12; xiii. 15, 16; xxvii. 6.) And who could make such a solemn protestation of his innocence and uprightness, before God and man, as we find in the xxix. xxx. xxxi. chapters of that book. If such a man had reason to say, "Wherefore then, hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh! that I had given up the ghost and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave." (See Job x. 18, 19.) With what amazing propriety might Christ say of Judas, the traitor, who sinned in such a dreadful manner, and had such horrible guilt on his conscience; who died in black despair, perished in such an awful situation, in his sins, and, probably, by his own hands; who suffered the most violent agitations of mind, died under the power of the horrid suggestions of the great enemy of men, without one smile, or look of forgiveness, from Jesus, or even daring to seek it; whose sorrow in this life far exceeded Job's, (for Job had no sense of guilt, treason, and ingratitude; nor was he filled with rage, blasphemy, and despair)—and who must probably have his portion in the second death;—"Good were it for that man, if he had never been born!" even upon the supposition that his torments are not designed to continue *while God exists*.

Jeremiah is another instance much to my purpose; who wished he had never been born, even at the very time when he knew that the Lord was his helper; only because he had been put in the stocks by Pashur, and had suffered a little pain and shame in a good cause. He was not afraid of *endless damnation*, nor yet of any future punishment; for he thus expressed himself, in all the language of full assurance: "but JEHOVAH is with me, as a mighty terrible one; therefore, my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper, their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. But, O JEHOVAH of Hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them (or, thou wilt let me see, &c.) for unto thee have I opened my cause. Sing unto JEHOVAH, praise ye JEHOVAH, for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil doers." How strong his faith! how full his assurance! Yet it is evident, that he thought it would have been much better for him personally, never to have been born; for he immediately adds, "cursed be the day wherein I was born; let not the day wherein my mother bare me, be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, a man-child is born unto thee, making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which JEHOVAH overthrew, and repented not. And let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave; and her womb to be always great with me. Wherefore came I out of the womb, to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" See Jer. xx. 11–18.

Here is not a word about a state of future punishment, much less endless damnation, and yet the good prophet Jeremiah thought, that if he had never been born, it would have been far better for him.

Friend.—I must confess, I never before considered it possible to answer this objection; you have done much towards solving it; but you must consider, that both Job and Jeremiah passionately exclaimed, and, through sorrow, uttered such words, as, in their cooler moments they repented of; and therefore, what they spake of themselves cannot wholly set aside the objection. Had they delivered those expressions as general truths, and declared, that man had much better never have been born, than to have suffered such degrees of worldly sorrow, it would have more than answered the objection; but, when men under grief exclaim in such a manner, we cannot ground a matter of such importance upon what they say respecting themselves; as their minds, being overwhelmed with trouble, and the immediate sensations of pain, are biased, and cannot utter the calm dictates of sober reason. But Christ, though under great sorrows himself, saw the case of Judas so deplorable, that he expressed himself thus respecting him; which was the sober truth, without exaggeration; and could this be said of him, or of any other of the human race, upon the supposition that misery is not absolutely endless?

Minister.—We do not find that Job or Jeremiah ever recanted, in their cooler moments, what they uttered in their sorrows; and our Lord, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem says, "And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days." See St. Matth. xxiv. 19, St. Mark xiii. 17. Not because of their future, endless damnation, in distinction from others; but on account of their present trouble and sorrow; as is explained, Luke xxi. 23. "But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days; for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people." And when the Saviour was led to death, we read, "And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, who also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus, turning unto them, said, daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they say to the mountains, fall on us; and to the hills, cover us.—For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" St. Luke xxii. 27, 31.

And who would not, a thousand times, choose rather never to have been born than even to see, far less experience, the miseries which came upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants? Would it not have been better for mothers never to have been born, than to have killed and eaten their own children in the siege?—and would it not have been better for the children never to have been born, than to have been food for their mothers?

But Solomon not only represents a state of great misery and affliction in this life, as worse than not to have been born, but also, a state of the greatest prosperity, if it ends in disgrace; for he says, "If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good; and also that he have no burial; I say that an untimely birth is better than he. For he (the untimely birth) cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness; and his name shall be covered with darkness. Moreover, he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other. Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good!" (*i. e.* no equivalent good, to balance his disgrace.) "Do not all go to one place?" All came from dust, and turn to dust again. Eccl. vi. 3–6.

The state here described by Solomon, is not only infinitely better than the damnation of hell, though limited by certain periods; but far preferable to many, if not to most situations of men in this life; and yet he prefers an untimely birth to a man who lives more than twice the age of Methuselah, and has an hundred children of his own, if he has not his soul filled or satisfied with good! and that he hath no burial, or has not honour, (credit, or reputation) at his death.

Long life and many children, were formerly esteemed as the greatest of blessings; but as the things of this life cannot fill the soul with good; so a man had better never have been born, than to have enjoyed the good things of this world in the greatest profusion, if he dies in disgrace, and has no burial, or is not honoured at his death. Yet this is not worthy to be named in the same day with the damnation of hell! yet is frequently threatened as a great and terrible judgment; which if it falls upon a man, however he may have enjoyed long life, health, wealth, and all kinds of prosperity; it makes it worse for him than if he never had been born, according to the decision of God himself; and, therefore, no wonder that Christ said of wicked Judas, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born."

Though I have answered you so largely yet one word might have sufficed to have answered the whole objection at first; viz. that Judas died before he had been born, and perished from his mother's womb, he would never have sinned, far less betrayed Christ; he would have entered into peace immediately, "where the wicked cease from troubling and where the weary are at rest." In this case, he would have escaped the judgment that came upon him, and would have had more rest than those who should live in all the affluence of life two thousand years, and beget each an hundred children, and yet should not be honoured at their death.

Some would have answered the objection shorter, by saying, Christ promised twelve thrones to his twelve apostles, among whom Judas was one; and therefore, he must be n

stored, or the promise cannot be fulfilled; See St. Matth. xix. 28. But this I do not insist upon; nevertheless, those who answer the objection this way, make an observation that may be worth attention: viz. that Peter, speaking of Judas saith, "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein:" that is, let his mansion be reserved for him, let no man take possession of it: but "His bishopric or office, let another take." See Acts i. 20, compared with Psalm lxix. 25, cix. 8. But I am rather of opinion that the desolation of the habitation of the wicked, and the want of inhabitants in their tents, respects this state, and is part of the curse pronounced upon all traitors; and may therefore, in an eminent sense, be applied to Judas, and also to the rebellious nation of the Jews at large: and therefore, as these words do not intend their Restoration, so neither are they any objection to it: for St. Paul applies part of the 69th Ps. to the Jews, as truly as St. Peter applies it to Judas: See Rom. x. 9, 10. And yet he says, "I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: But rather, through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?" And thus, from the 11th verse to the end of the chapter, goes on to speak of their being again received, reconciled and grafted again into their own olive tree; and that their blindness is only for a time: "And so all Israel shall be saved: There shall come out of Sion a deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:" That God's covenant or promise, is to take their sins away; that they are beloved for the Father's sake; that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance: that, therefore they shall obtain mercy at last: that for this very purpose God hath included them all (*or* shut them up in unbelief) that he might not only punish them thereby for their transgressions, and also, through their unbelief, cause the Gentiles to obtain mercy and salvation; but also, that he might have mercy upon all those, whom he had thus shut up in unbelief, without exception. See the whole chapter.

Here, then, are three designs worthy of a God of infinite wisdom, power and goodness, in this one dark dispensation, the rejection of the Jewish Church and nation:—1. That he might punish them for their iniquity:—2. That others might come in their room, stand in their office, and be made partakers of their privileges; and 3. That they may be reserved to mercy and forgiveness at last. And what happened to a whole nation of traitors, might happen to an individual of that nation; and *vice versa*.

Friend.—This is a subject of great importance, and if you can maintain the system you have espoused, and answer the remaining objections that may be brought against it, it will most certainly give me pleasure, and relieve my mind from great anxiety. I am a father of many children, and God knows the tears I have shed on their account, but could I receive your views, with what pleasure should I look upon them!

But I have many remaining difficulties and objections still to propose; may God preserve me from error and false doctrine. I wish to know what is really the truth in this matter, for above all things I dread deception.

Minister.—I assure you, my friend, that I should be as loth to deceive you as you are to be deceived; and had I not the surest confidence through the Lord of the truth and reality of this most glorious system, and did I not find the highest satisfaction in it myself, I should never presume to hold it forth to others. But as I have an engagement that calls me elsewhere just now, I must beg you to excuse me, hoping that in a little time I shall have another opportunity of hearing the remainder of your objections; and in the mean time I advise you to search the Scriptures, and pray God to lead you into all truth.

CONTENTS OF DIALOGUE III.

OBJECTION.—That the doctrine of the Restoration tends to licentiousness, and is calculated to encourage the wicked in a continuance of their evil ways, &c.

ANSWER.—*First*, by shewing the principles upon which the doctrine of the Restoration is founded. 1. God is the Creator of all. 2. His benevolence is universal. 3. Christ died for all without exception.

OBJECTION.—That Christ did not die for all, because he did not pray for all.

ANSWER.—This objection is entirely groundless;—for though in one place he prays exclusively for his apostles, yet a little after he prays for all that should believe on him, through their word, &c. 4. Another of the first principles upon which the doctrine of the Universal Restoration is founded, is the unchangeableness of God. 5. The immutability of his counsels; confirmed by his oath. 6. That God hath given all things into the hands of Christ, and that nothing that is given to him shall be lost. 7. That the Scriptures must be fulfilled, and that none of them can be broken. *Secondly*, It is proved that the doctrine of the Restoration cannot lead to licentiousness, because it is perfectly consistent with experimental religion. Queries asked upon this subject. A little sketch of the author's experience. Queries submitted to the consideration of all experienced Christians. Inferences deduced therefrom in favour of the doctrine of the Restoration. *Thirdly*, It is proved that the doctrine of the Restoration does not lead to licentiousness, by its tendency to practical religion. 1. We are commanded to love all mankind, even our enemies. 2. To do good to all. 3. To forgive all that trespass against us. 4. To pray for all men, that they may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. The belief of the Restoration so far from preventing us from these things, enables us to perform them with pleasure and consistency. All shall be restored at last by the blood of Christ. *Fourthly*, It is proved, that the doctrine of the Restoration is according to godliness, because the belief of it tends to fill our hearts with all amiable tempers, &c. *Fifthly*, The doctrine of the Restoration is vindicated from the charge of licentiousness, by an appeal to facts, especially by the amiable conduct of the *Tunkers*, or German Baptists in America, who universally hold these sentiments. Reply to those who call this the doctrine which Satan taught Eve in the Garden. Dr. *Whitby's* grand objection, that the unbelievers shall not see life, answered.

OBJECTION.—The doctrine of endless punishment said to be the greatest possible restraint upon sin.

ANSWERED.—1. By showing that God does not always lay the greatest possible restraint upon sin. 2. The idea of limited punishment by appearing more just and reasonable to the mind, is more calculated to restrain sin and iniquity than the doctrine of endless misery. 3. That in fact, though the greater part have professed to believe endless damnation, yet their belief appears not to have much restrained them from sin. 4. The great number of heathen people that die without ever hearing the gospel, infants, idiots, persons born deaf, &c., render it probable that many are reclaimed in a future state. 5. That the intention of God is not so much to restrain sin, as to shew its enormity; and finally to destroy it out of the universe. 6. If the doctrine of the Restoration should be abused, that can be no argument against it, as the gospel itself has been perverted; yet it is the greatest blessing to mankind; therefore it is evident that this glorious doctrine cannot justly be charged with the least tendency towards licentiousness.

OBJECTION.—It would not be prudent in God even if he intended finally to restore the wicked to let them know his gracious designs beforehand; it is time enough to let them know his gracious purposes towards them, when his former threatenings have failed of their effect, but not before.

ANSWERED.—God has thought it the abounding of his wisdom and prudence to make known to his saints this mystery of his will, even his promise to rehead all things in Christ. The discovery is chiefly intended for the comfort and satisfaction of the good, and not for the encouragement of the bad. God has frequently mixed promises of great mercies with threatenings of terrible judgments; yet his threatenings are not thereby weakened.

OBJECTION.—The doctrine of the Restoration seems not very plainly revealed in the Scripture, or it would not have been so long hidden from so many great and good men.

ANSWER.—Things that have been plainly revealed have been still hidden from great and good men; as the death and resurrection of Christ.

QUESTION.—But how comes this man to know better than all the world? &c.

ANSWER.—The charge denied. Many have known, believed, preached and defended it. The doctrine of endless misery is one principal cause of the disagreement among Christians.

DIALOGUE III.

Friend.—I am glad to meet with you, to have some farther conversation upon the very important and interesting subject of the final Restoration. Since I saw you last I have had opportunity of hearing some very capital objections made against this system, which I beg leave to state in the plainest and strongest manner.

Minister.—Your frankness is well pleasing to me, and I am ready to hear whatever can be urged against my sentiments, and will do my endeavour to answer all reasonable objections; therefore propose them as soon as you think proper.

Friend.—One grand objection that is very generally made against the doctrine of the Restoration, is, that it tends to *licentiousness*; that it is the doctrine that the serpent preached to Eve; for we read, (Gen. iii. 4,) "And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die;" and that it is a doctrine calculated to give encouragement to the wicked to continue in their evil ways; that it is "saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace;" and that this doctrine is as dangerous as that of the wicked prophetesses of Ezekiel's time, of whom GOD says, "With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous

sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life. They say unto them that dispise me, JEHOVAH hath said, ye shall have peace! and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon you." Jer. viii. 11, Ezek. xiii. 22, Jer. xxiii. 17.

It is said that it is the nature of God to lay the highest possible restraint upon sin, and, therefore, he has threatened it with eternal or endless punishment; and this is even found too weak to prevent the prevailing iniquity. What a flood of impiety, therefore, would overflow the world, if it should be generally believed, that after some ages of suffering, mankind should be restored to some degree of happiness! Would not the restraints be wholly taken off from the lusts and passions of the wicked, if once this doctrine should become prevalent? Will you be so kind as to give a fair and candid reply to this objection?

Minister.—This objection is stated with all possible, force, I shall, therefore, endeavour to answer it as well as I can; putting in this *caveat*, that if I shall not answer it to your satisfaction, do not imagine that no solid answer can be given; but impute it to my not being sufficiently master of my subject, or not being able to express my mind so clearly as I could wish. As this objection is frequently made, and often used, by people who mean well, but have not considered the subject thoroughly, I shall be as explicit as I possibly can upon it.

I would first observe, that the great truths, or first principles, upon which the Restoration is founded, and from which it is derived by natural and easy consequences, are far from tending to licentiousness. But in order to make this evident, it will be proper here to set them down in their order.

First Principles upon which the Doctrine of the Final and Universal Restoration is founded.

1. GOD *is the universal and only Creator of all*; contrary to the opinion of the *Manichees* of old, who believed the *devil* to be the creator of most, if not all visible things. The *Mugletonians* of the last century, and the *Buchanites* lately, assert nearly the same sentiments; contrary to Rev. iv. 11, Col. i. 16, Psalm c. 3, Numb. xvi. 22, Isaiah lxiv. 8, Ezek. xviii. 4, Zech. xii. 1, and a vast number of other scriptures.

Now who can say, that this noble thought, which St. Paul enlarges upon so beautifully, (Acts xvii. 24–30) tends in the least, to make men wicked? Does it not tend to dignify and ennoble human nature, to be told, that God is our Father, Creator, and First Cause: and that we were made by his power, according to his will, and for his pleasure and that the *chief end* for which he made us, was, *to glorify his name and enjoy him forever?*—as the Assembly's Catechism beautifully declares. This is one of the principles from which God himself deduces the certainty of the final end of wrath, as I have observed before: "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirits should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." Isaiah lvii. 16. Those who venture to contradict their Maker, and say *that he will contend forever, and be always wroth!* ought to be able at least to give us as good a reason why he will, as he has assigned why he will not; and consequently prove that he hath not made all souls; which is the true foundation upon which endless misery must be founded, and the only doctrine which is perfectly consistent with it.

The poor untutored Indians in America, argued (with a missionary that was sent from Sweden to convert them) from the universal providence of God, that he, who was so kind a Father as to provide for their bodies all things needful, had not wholly neglected their souls. But this I do not insist upon, though, I think, the argument has weight in it; and certainly, the providential goodness of God, and his long suffering, tends to lead men to repentance. Rom. ii. 4, 2 Pet. iii. 9.

2. *The universal benevolence of the Deity*, or the *love* of God to his creatures, is one of the first principles from which the general Restoration is deduced; and who can say that this leads to licentiousness? If those who believe that God loves them, in particular, find *that* consideration the strongest obligation on them to love him again, and to obey his will; by the same rule, if all the individuals of the whole human race, were to believe that God loved each one of them, would not the same cause produce the same effect? And if so, can this be charged as a licentious doctrine, which is expressly grounded upon a cause which powerfully operates to produce holiness? Is there anything like argument in this reasoning? I know that God loves me, and seeks to do me good; therefore, I must hate him. What should we think of a woman who should leave her husband; and do all in her power against him, and should be able to give no better reasons for it than the following: "My husband loves me, and I know it, and he has always loved me, and always will; and therefore I am determined to hate, ridicule, despise, and contemn him, and have left him for this cause, and am determined never to love or obey him more." Bad as human nature is, I question whether such instances often occur. We commonly say, that love begets love. "We love him because he first loved us;" says the apostle, 1 John iv. 19. Therefore, the doctrine of God's universal *benevolence*, cannot lead to licentiousness, in any light in which it can be viewed: for if he really loves us, he will do all in his power to bring us to love him again, and to be like him; and I am sure the consideration of his love to us, goes as far as moral persuasion can go, to induce us to love him again; nay, the belief of it is acknowledged to be one of the strongest motives to obedience; and the love of God, shed abroad in the heart, pro-

duces the best effects, and is the most powerful principle, and spring, of good and virtuous actions, that we are acquainted with. This being a first principle, from which the Universal Restoration is concluded, we are happy to find, that "God is love:" and that he "so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life: For, God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." See 1 John iv. 16. St. John iii. 16, 17. But it is not so much my business now to shew, that the sentiment is scriptural, as to shew that it is not of a dangerous tendency. The following words, however, are so beautiful, that I take the liberty to mention them:—"but thou hast mercy upon all; for thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men, because they should amend. For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made; for never wouldst thou have made any thing, if thou hadst hated it. And how could any thing have endured, if it had not been thy will; or been preserved, if not called by thee? But thou sparest all; for they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of souls. For thine incorruptible Spirit is in all things: therefore chasteneth thou them, by little and little, that offend, and warnest them, by putting them in remembrance wherein they have offended, that leaving their wickedness, they may believe on thee, O Lord. For thy power is the beginning of righteousness; and because thou art the Lord of all, it maketh thee to be gracious unto all. But thou, O God, art gracious and true; long suffering, and in mercy ordering all things. For if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy power; but we will not sin, knowing that we are counted thine." Wisdom of Solomon xi. 23, 26; xii. 1, 2, 16; xv. 1, 2. "Jehovah is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. Jehovah is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O Jehovah; and thy saints shall bless thee." Psal. cxlv. 8–10.

3. Another great principle upon which the Restoration depends, is, that Christ died for all: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." (or all.) Heb. ii. 9. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 1, 2. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

I need not multiply passages to prove that Christ died for all; for though the universality of his death is not expressly asserted, in every text where it is mentioned that he died, it must always be understood; because it is never denied in any place, and is plainly, and pointedly declared in those I have quoted. And, besides, it is evident that in the apostles' time, the universality of the death of Christ was a first principle, universally acknowledged, and therefore, St. Paul reasons from it as such; which it would have been highly preposterous for him to do, if that had not been the case: as, for example, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all," (which is not disputed by any, and which we know to be a truth) "then were all dead: and that he died for all; that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Friend.—But have you never heard it argued that Christ did not die for all, because he did not pray for all?

Minister.—I remember, when a lad, I was sent to a neighbour's house, and overheard the good man, the master of the family, read in a book after this manner: "Christ did not die for all, because he did not pray for all; I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." St. John xvii. 9. And I then thought the argument conclusive; but I am now at a loss whether the author of that book meant to deceive his readers; or, whether he had never read the chapter through critically. For had he read the 20th verse, he would have found these words, which would have overthrown his hypothesis:—"Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also, who shall believe on me through their word." If Christ had prayed for all, in the 9th verse, for whom he died, he could not have enlarged his prayer so much in the 20th verse, as to take in not them only, but all who should believe on him through their word. Neither does he stop here, but goes on to pray for those that believe in these words: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me and I in thee: that they also may be one in us." And why is all this unity prayed for among unbelievers? Surely, it hath never been accomplished; but it shall be, for this great and admirable purpose, viz.: "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." v. 21–23.

Friend.—But when shall the world believe, and know that Christ is sent from God?

Minister.—When all that believe shall be one, as the Father and Son are one. When the great marriage of the Lamb shall be celebrated, and his bride shall be one, in the bond of universal love and fellowship, as the Father and Son now are: when the church shall be perfected in one; shall dwell in love, and dwell in God, as the Father dwells in the Son, and the Son in the Father: when Zion's watchmen shall see, eye to eye: when all

believers shall speak the same thing; when there shall be no more divisions among them; when they shall be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

This was the state that St. Paul besought the Corinthians to press after, and wished them to attain; but he had the mortification to see them fall short of it, as all the Christian churches have, from that day to this. But when *Christ* shall give that glory and honour to his bride, which the *Father* gave to him, and shall thus unite her to himself, in an indissoluble union, and the several members of his body the Church, shall be as much united one to another, as the members of the natural body are; or, to express it in his own words, "As thou, *Father*, art in *me*, and *I* in *thee*." When thus the church shall be one, in spirit, love, design, judgment, &c., as the *Father* and *Son* are; then shall the *world believe*, and believing, have life; then shall the *world know* him, whom to know is life eternal. See verses 2, 3. But as this great cause has never yet existed, the *effect* has not yet followed; but when the *first* shall be, the *last* shall take place in consequence.

The petitions in that most excellent prayer, that may, with great propriety be called the LORD's prayer, may be divided into four classes. 1. For himself, verses 1st and 5th. 2. For his apostles, 9, 19. 3. For them that should believe through their word, 20–23. And 4, for the world, verses 21, 23: as I have just observed, and need not add any more upon so plain a matter.

Friend.—Proceed, if you please, to show, that the doctrine of the *universality* of the death of *Christ* does not lead to licentiousness.

Minister.—It is evident that it doth not; but on the contrary, it is the strongest motive to all who believe it, to love and live to him who died for them, and rose again. We *are not our own, but are bought with a price;* therefore, we are exhorted not to be the servants of sin, slaves to our passions, and servants to men; but to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his; and the apostle beseeches us by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is our reasonable service. Forasmuch, as we know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of *Christ*, as of a *Lamb* without blemish, and without spot. See 2 Cor. v. 15; Rom. vi. 12, 13; 1 Cor. vii. 23; vi. 19, 20; Rom. xii. 1; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

What a horrid thought would it be, that *Christ* should be the minister of sin, and that his blood-shedding should cause wickedness to abound! The love of God in giving his *Son* to die, is enough to move a heart of stone. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time, *Christ* died for the ungodly, for, scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure, for a good (kind, benevolent, generous) man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, *Christ* died for us. Much more being now justified through his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his *Son;* much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. v. 6, 10.

Here the death of the *Lord Jesus* is laid as the ground and the salvation of men inferred from it, with the greatest possible certainty; yet, will any one say, that because *Christ* hath died for him, therefore he will indulge himself in sin? God forbid. Some say that if they believed this doctrine, they would live in sin; and indulge themselves in their lusts and passions: but then it may be observed, that those who say so are its enemies, and those who oppose the view, and not those who receive it.

There is something so brutish and unaccountable in such dispositions, as would lead men to hate their best friends, merely because they are so; that would lead them to hate God, because he loved them; despise *Christ*, merely because he died for them; that for the honour of human nature, I would hope these instances are rare. But to the point; I have conversed with many who believe that *Christ* died for them in particular; and yet I never heard them say, that they hated him for it; but, on the contrary, that they loved him exceedingly. Now, is not the same cause likely to produce the same effect? If a thousand persons, for instance, all believing that *Christ* died for them, find their hearts constrained to love him for it, would it not have the same effect upon ten thousand, ten millions, or ten millions of millions?—And if it would cause licentiousness to abound in the world, to preach that *Christ* died for all, if it was universally believed; by the same rule it must cause it to prevail, in a lesser degree, to preach that he died for a small part, at least, among those who believe themselves to be of the number; and, therefore, it must not be preached at all, that he died for any?—Who can deny the consequence? It seems to be evident, that *Christ* has done and suffered too much for those that he died for, to lose them finally; and thus the universal Restoration stands connected necessarily with the universality of the death of *Christ*, and is deduced therefrom, in the easiest manner; therefore, the doctrine of the *former* cannot tend to licentiousness, as it stands upon the ground of the *latter*, which hath been demonstrated to have no such tendency.

4. Another principle upon which the universal doctrine depends, is, *the unchangeableness of God:* whom he loves once, he always loves; he loved his creatures when he made them, as none can well deny; their sins he never loved, nor ever will; he hath declared, that he loved us when sinners, but never *as* sinners. His eternal and constant hatred of all sin, and his unchangeable love of all his creatures, are of the nature of primary truths

from which the doctrine of the general Restoration may be easily and plainly inferred. In this view we may understand those many dreadful threatenings and gracious promises, made to the same people and persons: both shall be fulfilled: the first, while they continue as rebels, which are designed to humble and subdue them; the last, when they shall have accepted of the punishment of their iniquity; when their uncircumcised hearts are humble, when their stubborn knees shall bow to JEHOVAH, and their former rebellious tongues shall swear allegiance to him.

Does this idea lead to licentiousness, that God hates sin, and determines to pursue it to entire destruction, and never to put up his sword so long as there is a rebel in the universe; yet, at the same time, has no positive hatred to the souls which he has made, but only wishes them to return to order? This idea appears to me, equally to check presumption and despair; and tends to put an end to licentiousness, rather than to encourage it: for if rebels are assured that their rightful sovereign hates them, and will never suffer them to be reconciled to him, it naturaly causes them to fight with tenfold rage, as all warriors will testify: as on the other hand if they believe he is too weak, or undetermined to conquer them, they will be presumptuous, and continue the war. It cannot, therefore, be affirmed, by any person of reason, that the declaration that God will destroy sin, tends to promote it; or that his love of order, and hatred of evil, being compatible with his love to the creatures he has made, is a doctrine that encourages men to rebel; the contrary is evident; and yet these are the very grounds of the Universal Restoration; which cannot therefore be licentious.

5. Another of the first principles of the Restoration is, the *immutability of God's counsels;* which he hath confirmed by an oath, "That by two immutable things (*viz.* his word and oath) in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. vi. 17, 18. "God hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together (*or* rehead) in one, all things in *Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him; in whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh *all things* according to the counsel of his own will." Ephes. i. 8–11. God is our Saviour (*or Soteros*, Restorer) who will have all men to be saved, (*sothenai*, restored) and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. This is the will and counsel of that God who "Doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" Dan. iv. 35. He hath sworn by himself, the word is gone out of his mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto him "every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Isaiah xlv. 23. The counsel of GOD shall stand; he will perform his pleasure, notwithstanding all the opposition that men can make: GOD is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or, hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numb. xxiii. 19. If GOD will have all men to be saved and restored, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, if it is his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to rehead all things in *Christ*, both in heaven and on earth; if he hath sworn that unto him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear; and if he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and is determined to perform all his pleasure, which he is able to do; and with him nothing which he pleases is impossible. I say if all these things are true, (as who, that believes the Scriptures, can deny,) then, is not the doctrine of the Restoration true? And who will venture to charge that with licentiousness, which GOD, in the counsel of his will hath purposed, and is determined to perform? We know, that the will of GOD is a will to all goodness, and that he cannot do anything unjust or contrary to his holy nature, or inconsistent with his plan of moral government, or that shall tend to promote rebellion; therefore, if GOD had seen that this great work had been, in any respect, injurious to his perfections, character, government, &c., he would not have proposed it; and if he had foreseen that the knowledge of it would have been hurtful to mankind, he would not have revealed it: but since he hath done both, we may certainly argue that it is not a licentious doctrine to declare, that GOD will finally make all his intelligent creatures happy; by making them all his subjects, by destroying their sins, and making them holy, in a way perfectly consistent with all his perfections and attributes; without doing the least injury to his character, or rendering his moral government weak, or making any of his words void, whether threatenings or promises, or in the least setting aside the sanctions of his law or gospel, or a future state of rewards and punishments; without derogating at all from the glory of the Mediator, but rather exalting it to the highest possible pitch without saddening the hearts of the righteous, or diminishing in the least, from the happiness of Heaven, but rather causing it to increase; for if there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, there must be more over many, in exact proportion; and as GOD will certainly give greater possible joy to his chosen, and there is no doubt but it will receive addition from every one that is restored, or brought home to himself; therefore, it can only be brought to its highest possible pitch by the *Universal Restoration*, which doctrine cannot, therefore, be licentious, as God has appointed and revealed it, and all holy beings

(except some weak good men on earth) rejoice therein exceedingly.

6. Another of the principles on which the *general Restoration* is founded is, *that God hath given all things into the hand of Christ*, who hath declared, *that it is the Father's will, that of all that he gave him he should lose nothing;* and that power was given him over all, that he should give the knowledge of God, even eternal life, to all whom the *Father* had given him; and that *all* without exception, whom the *Father* hath given, shall come in such a manner, as not to be cast out: But as all these scriptures have been recited, and reasoned upon before, I shall only now observe that as God the Father hath given *all* things to Christ, and as he hath engaged to bring *all* back, without exception, and hath both *will* and *power* to perform this work, and came into the world on purpose to accomplish it, it must of consequence, be finally performed: yet it cannot tend to licentiousness, or the God of Heaven, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, would never have planned it, approved it, or sought to execute it.

Many more first principles, on which the doctrine of the *Restoration* is founded, might be mentioned, and shewn to be far from tending to licentiousness. But I shall mention but one more; and that is—*The Scriptures must be fulfilled, the Scciptures cannot be broken:* None of the words of God can fail of being accomplished; and he hath not only denounced dreadful threatenings, but made many gracious promises to the same people. These cannot be fulfilled together;—and if there is no truth in the Restoration, I cannot see how the *latter* will ever be fulfilled at all; and if sins are not punished in the persons who commit them, I am equally at a loss what sense or truth there can be in the *former*. It would be a great task to collect all the texts which justify the remark, that theatenings and promises belong to the same people in different periods, some specimens of which have been given in the course of these dialogues. Now, it cannot lead to licentiousness, to suppose that the Scriptures shall all be fulfilled; but it must lead to infidelity, and all kinds of evil to suppose the contrary.

These are the first principles upon which the doctrine of the Restoration stands, and by which it is supported; and as these have been all considered, and proved to have no tendency to encourage sin, separately, much less can they have any such tendency, jointly; and then it evidently follows, that a doctrine which seems necessarily deduced, or inferred by undeniable consequences, from all these considerations united, cannot be false, or have any evil tendency.

But I shall next proceed to shew that all true, experimental, and practical religion, seems so consistent with the *Universal Restoration*, that it may be reckoned a wonder, that all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have dilligently practised his commands, have not in all ages been fully convinced of the truth of it.

Friend.—Is it possible that you can do this? If so, I hope your reasoning will be attended to; and I must confess, that you have cleared your way so well, by considering the first principles of the doctrine, and shewing that they are very far from tending to licentiousness, that I am half inclined to think you will be able to answer this objection, formidable as it has been considered hitherto.

Minister.—As I trust you have been made acquainted with experimental religion, I need only appeal to your own experience, for the truth of what I advance; and I am apt to think, if you will answer me candidly, to a few questions, you must acknowledge either that the Restoration is true, or that your experience is false.

Friend.—I am willing to give you as plain and candid answers as I can; for it will be of no use to deny what the Lord has done for my soul.

Minister.—Let me then ask you in the first place, did you not see yourself lost and undone; and that you were vile before God, unworthy of his mercy, and totally unable to deliver yourself from your sin and misery?

Friend.—I certainly did; and I was sometimes ready to think there was hardly such a sinner on earth as myself, all circumstances considered; for I had sinned against such light and love, that I thought all the world might be forgiven sooner than myself.

Minister.—And were you not brought by the power of God, to resign yourself into his hands, without reserve, to do with you, and dispose of you, according to his will and pleasure; being convinced that he neither would nor could do you any injustice?

Friend.—O yes; and then I found peace; my rebellion against God ceased; I looked upon him quite differently from what I did before; I saw that he was wholly right and just, and that I was entirely to blame. My murmurings against him ceased; I viewed him as such a holy, good, merciful, and yet righteous God that I could trust my soul in his hands, with the most entire satisfaction.

Minister.—And when *Christ* was revealed to you as a *Saviour*, how did he appear?

Friend.—As one able and mighty to save, even to the uttermost; and I thought there was not only a sufficiency in him for me, the vilest of all, but for the whole world, yea for a thousand worlds, had there been so many. His blood seemed to me so precious, his obedience and sufferings so meritorious, his power so great, his love so rich, boundless and free, that I was overcome with the transporting view. And as I saw in him a fulness for all, so I found in him an infinite willingness to save all: for how could I think otherwise? I knew myself to be most unworthy, and that he had graciously pitied me: I beheld his love, like a river, flowing down to me as free as water; and I was amazed that I had not beheld it before, in the same light. I saw that the love of God to me, did not now *begin*, but was now *manifested* to my soul. I saw that there was no change in God, but all in

myself. These words were precious to my heart at that time:—"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love;—therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Jer. xxxi. 3. As also these: "Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." St. Matth. ix. 2.

Minister.—You have brought my own experience to my mind: It pleased God, by an incident too trifling to mention, to bring me to seek earnestly for an unfading treasure; and by a train of circumstances, fixed the concern deeply upon my mind; and I laboured night and day, but could obtain no rest, till one morning—a time never to be forgotten!—as I was walking on a journey, under great distress, and when deliverance seemed farther from me than ever, all at once I was brought to resign my soul into the hands of God, and thus I expressed myself: "Lord, here I am: a poor helpless sinner: I resign myself into thine hands; take me, and deal with me just as thou pleasest. I know thou canst do me no injustice." Immediately these words came into my mind, with great power and sweetness: "In an acceptible time have I heard thee; and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." Isaiah xlix. 8. And I had then such a view of Christ as to make me cry out "Glory to God in the highest! This is salvation; I know this is salvation!" Then those passages which you have mentioned, came into my mind with great energy; and I saw the fulness, sufficiency, and willingness of Christ to save me and all men, in such a manner as constrained me to venture my soul into his arms; and if I had ten thousand souls, I could have trusted them all in his hands. And O how did I long that every soul of Adam's race might come to know the love of *God* in *Christ Jesus!* And I thought I could not be willing to live any longer on earth, unless it might please God to make me useful to my fellow creatures.

"What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill."

This is a little abstract of what God did then graciously teach me by his Spirit; but I had been brought up in that particular system and in the course of a few years came to be so firmly attached to it, as to refuse, in my preaching, to make general invitations to mankind at large; rightly reasoning with myself, that if provision was only made for a small part, I had no warrant to call or invite the whole to come and partake; and therefore only pressed the duty on such characters, as *hungry*, *thirsty*, *weary*, *heavy laden*, such as were *without money*, *sensible sinners*, &c., all of which I concluded to be of the *elect;* because I judged the Spirit had begun to operate savingly upon their hearts; and that to these, and these only, the Scriptures directed invitations to be made; never considering that text—"Hearken unto me, ye stout hearted, that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness; and it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry." Isaiah xlvi. 12, 13. During the time that I remained in this close hearted system, labouring with all my might to maintain it, I chanced to come to a house where, as far as I can judge, was a very sensible and pious young woman, whom I never saw before or since. She gave a very judicious account of the work of grace upon her heart; but when she came to that part, where she said she beheld an infinite fulness in Christ for all the world, I interrupted her, and told her that could not be; for there was no provision made for all, and therefore it was impossible that she could have any such discoveries made to her by the Spirit of God. This I insisted upon, according to my system, contrary to my experimental knowledge; (O the mischiefs of bigotry, prejudice, and vain attachment to system!) she, on the contrary, maintained, that she clearly viewed matters in that light; and that she certainly was taught to believe, that in Christ there was a fulness and freeness for all. This I denied; and she was thereby prevented from finishing what she had begun. I can never forgive myself for the opposition I made to what I knew to be truth by experience; and as I did not inquire the name of the person, I have had no opportunity of making a recantation by letter, as I ought to have done; and having never been in the place since, and it being highly improbable that I ever shall be again, I feel myself extremely hurt, whenever I think of it.

Friend.—I can but admire the agreement between us in matters of experience; for I found the same dispositions of mind that you mentioned, when it pleased *God* to reveal his *Son* in me.

Minister.—I never found an experienced Christian in my life, but would give much the same account, provided that his system was not in sight; and I have found some, that though they were violently attached to the contrary system, and knew my intention in asking the questions; yet answered the following affirmatively.

Did you not see and feel yourselves the vilest of sinners?

Did you not view the love of God infinitely full, free, and unmerited?

Did you not behold in *Christ* an infinite fulness, sufficiency and willingness, to save all, without exception?

Did you not love all, and wish all might come and partake of his grace?

Did you not earnestly desire the salvation of all, not only of your family, friends, neighbours and nation; but also of your enemies, and of all mankind?—Could not you embrace the whole human race in the arms of benevolence?

Did you not find it in your heart to pray for the salvation of all mankind, as for your own?

If you had as much power as good will, would you not bring all to bow to the sceptre of grace, and to be reconciled to *God* through *Jesus Christ?*

Friend.—I do not see how an experienced, person can refuse to say yes, to all these questions; they are so agreeable to the very tempers of the new born soul; and I am sure, I found them in my heart, at the very time when I first tasted of the love of God.

Minister.—Well then, my friend, let me ask you, from whence did these tempers and dispositions proceed?

Friend.—To be candid, I think they were given me from above, and came down from the Father of lights, from whence, every good and perfect gift cometh; and I am the more apt to think so, because I found contrary dispositions in my heart before; and the more I am sensible of the forgiving love of God, the more I find these affections which you have described, and these desires for the good of others.

Minister.—Then let me ask you, can a small drop be larger than the unfathomed abyss, and ocean of love? Have you more compassion towards your fellow creatures than the God that made them? Can any effect be greater than its cause? Would you bring all to submit to God, and be happy, if you could? And will not he, to whom nothing that he pleases to do is impossible, bring all his creatures to be reconciled to himself at last? He has infinitely more love to his creatures, than all the saints and angels in glory have; he is possessed of infinite power and wisdom, as well as love; all means to accomplish the work are known to him; he can do it in a way that shall cause his praise to abound exceedingly, in a way perfectly consistent with all his perfections, and the whole of his glorious character; it is his will and purpose so to do, as has been proved at large. What, then, can hinder him from fulfilling it?

Friend.—I am not able to gainsay this reasoning; it seems almost undeniable. But can you shew that the doctrine of the Restoration stands connected with practical religion, or the keeping of the commandments of God?

Minister.—I can very easily do that, in every instance; but shall only attend to the following, as a specimen.

1. Our Lord has commanded us to *love all mankind*; not our brethren and friends only, but even our greatest enemies; and all for this purpose, that we may be the children of our Father who is in Heaven, whose love is universal, and whose tender mercies are over all his works: See St. Matth. v. 44, 48; St. Luke vi. 27, 36. But if God doth not love all himself, Christ hath commanded us to be *more perfect*, in that respect, than our Father, who is in Heaven; which to suppose, is highly absurd. What shall we say to that doctrine that teaches us, that God hates with a perfect hatred, many of those whom he hath commanded us to love as ourselves?

Therefore, there is nothing in the doctrine of the Restoration, contrary to the love of our neighbour; which on the contrary is promoted thereby.

2. We are commanded to *do good to all men*, as we have opportunity. This is recommended to us by the example of our heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust; and no person can say, that the belief of this doctrine tends, in the least, to hinder us from doing good to our fellow creatures; but rather encourages us so to do, from the consideration that God loves them all, and does good to all, and is determined to make them all the subjects of his kingdom at last.

3. We are commanded to *forgive all men their trespasses*, and to pray, saying, "Forgive us our (debts, *or*) trespasses, as we forgive (our debtors, *or*) them that trespass against us;" St. Matth. vi. 12; St. Luke xi. 4. And our Lord says, "For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses;" St. Matth. vi. 14, 15. See also xviii. 21, 35; St. Mark xi. 25, 26; St. Luke vi. 37.

Now, is it possible to suppose, with any degree of reason, that our Lord would command us, upon pain of his highest displeasure, to forgive those whom he hated, and determined to punish while he should exist, without having the least desire or design to do them good? Has he promised us the greatest blessings, if we will forgive all men; and will he never forgive them? He that can believe this, let him believe it. However, since forgiving all men is a plain command, which none can deny; I trust, no one will venture to say, that believing the final Restoration of all men, at last, will have any tendency to make us break this precept of our Saviour's, upon which he lays so much stress; but, I think, the contrary is evident.

4. We are commanded to pray for all men. St. Paul says, "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour (or Restorer) who will have all men to be saved (or restored) and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man *Christ Jesus*; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." This is the great doctrine of the Gospel, the very foundation of Christianity: "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle; (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." The apostle not only believed, but taught; not only taught, but commanded others to teach and preach this great doctrine, of God's being the Saviour, or Restorer of all men. In this he glorified, saying, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour (or Restorer) of all men, especially of those that believe. These things command and teach."

Upon this grand foundation, St. Paul re-

commends prayer to all men; saying, "I will therefore, that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." 1 Tim. ii. 1, 8; iv. 9–11.

Observe, the apostle recommends prayer for all men; and wills, that men should pray every where, at all times, and in all places, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. How nearly forgiving all men, and praying for all men, stand connected! and both are plainly and peremptorily recommended by our Lord, who says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

We are commanded to pray for all men, because it is the will of God that all men should be saved (or restored) because Christ hath given himself a ransom for all. And we are bid to pray without doubting. O what a world is this! May we, ought we, to pray, for the salvation of all men, without doubting? Surely, God would never have commanded us to do this, unless it was his purpose to restore all men, in his own time; and no man can say, that the belief of the Restoration will prevent our praying for all men.

I was once on a journey, and called in at the house of one of my former good friends. Several religious persons were there; and, after some time, my sentiments came to be spoken of, and they seemed to wonder how I could embrace the opinion, that all men, finally, would be saved! I told them, however many might preach against it, that no person, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, could pray against it; but, on the contrary, we could pray for it in faith, nothing wavering, as God had commanded, and as his Spirit naturally inspired; that no person could pray God not to save or restore all mankind, without being shocked at the blasphemy and impiety of such a prayer; but that our Lord had said, that all things whatsoever we asked in prayer, believing that we should receive, should be granted, let them be things seemingly ever so impossible; that if we asked any thing according to his will, it should be done; and that it was his positive and declared will, that all men should be saved (or restored) and come to the knowledge of the truth; that we were ordered to pray for it in faith, without doubting; and, therefore, it was as evident as the nature of things required, that it would be done; since God had never ordered us to pray for any thing that he was not able and willing to do. This, and much more, I said, and they seemed exceedingly well satisfied; especially, when I informed them, that it was through the blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, that the prisoners should be sent forth out of the pit wherein is no water, and that all should be restored through his mediation.

Friend.—Then you hold that even the damned shall be finally restored and delivered by the power of Jesus, and through his blood shedding. I have heard it objected against your scheme, that it tended to set at naugl the whole mediatorial plan, and to depreciat the blood of Jesus, which he had shed to purg our sins away; though I never observed an thing like this in your discourses, either i public or in private.

Minister.—No; God forbid that I shoul ever set aside the blood that cleanseth fror all sin; nor can I be charged with it, unles having a much higher idea of its merit tha my opposers, may be looked upon as tendin to depreciate it. They hold that it sha cleanse a small number from their sins; I be lieve that it shall cleanse, heal, and restor the whole human race. They believe that it virtue endures for a little season; I maintai that it shall continue to all ages, until all evi shall be destroyed out of the universe.

Friend.—I am satisfied that you do no mean to set at naught the powerful blood o the dear Redeemer, but on the contrary, yo suppose that your views tend more to exalt it Pray proceed in your discourse.

Minister.—I need not say much more upo this matter. Our Saviour has said, "If an man will do his (the Father's) will, he shal know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." St. John vii 17. This is the surest rule; practice religion love, revere, and serve God; love all men even your enemies; do good to all, forgive all and pray for all; and then ask, is the doctrin of final Restoration contrary to this manner o life? If it be, reject it; for these commands are plain; and if these principles are inconsistent with the observation of these precepts then avoid them, as you would death and hell. But, I trust, it has been shown that they have no such tendency; but the contrary. For instance, does this doctrine tend to make us hate God, and his character? Does it naturally fill our minds with selfishness, and prevent benevolence from ruling within us? Does it fill us with pride, and cause us to look down with contempt upon those that are beneath us in life, and banish humility from our hearts? Does the belief of this, cause our breasts to swell with pale envy, and rancorous malice, at the happiness of others? Does it cause us to burn with hellish rage, fury and madness, against mankind? Does it tend to destroy meekness, and increase wrath? If these questions require (either from the nature of things, or from known facts) the answers to be in the affirmative; then I would abhor such a system, and wish it to be universally detested: but, if on the contrary, the candid inquirer must answer in the negative, and say, that the doctrine of the final Restoration does not tend to produce selfishness, envy, pride, or wrath; but, on the contrary, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men;" that it causes benevolence, meekness, humility, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, and all goodness, to abound and increase; then it cannot be a licentious doctrine, and is not to be discarded on that account; for it is a maxim with St. John, that "He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and

there is none occason of stumbling in him." 1 John ii. 10. That is, he cannot receive, hold, maintain, or do, any thing essentially or materially wrong; and, therefore, can give no just occasion of offence. "For, all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. For he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." Gal. v. 14; Rom. xiii. 8-10.

But it is not only from reasoning, but from facts, that I am able to prove that the belief of the doctrine of the Universal Restoration, does not lead men to sin. The Tunkers, or German Baptists, in Pennsylvania, and the states adjacent, who take the Scriptures as their only guide, in matters both of faith and practice, have always (as far as I know) received, and universally, at present, hold these sentiments: but such Christians, I have never seen as they are; so averse are they to all sin, and to many things that other Christians esteem lawful, that they not only refuse to swear, to go to war, &c., but are so afraid of doing any thing contrary to the commands of Christ, that no temptation would prevail upon them even to sue any person at law, for either name, character, estate, or any debt, be it ever so just. They are industrious, sober, temperate, kind, charitable people; envying not the great, nor despising the mean: They read much, they sing and pray much, they are constant attendants upon the worship of God; their dwelling houses are all houses of prayer; they walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, both in public and private. They bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. No noise of rudeness, shameless mirth, loud, vain laughter, is heard within their doors. The law of kindness is in their mouths; no sourness or moroseness, disgraces their religion; and whatsoever they believe their Saviour commands, they practice, without inquiring or regarding what others do.

I remember the Rev. Morgan Edwards, formerly minister of the Baptist church in Philadelphia, once said to me, "God always will have a visible people on earth; and these are his people at present, above any other in the world." And in his history of the Baptists in Pennsylvania, speaking of these people, he says: "General redemption they certainly held, and, withal, general salvation; which tenets (though wrong) are consistent. In a word, they are meek and pious Christians; and have justly acquired the character of *the harmless Tunkers*."

Thus have I proved that this doctrine is not licentious; both from the first principles on which it is founded, from the nature of experimental and practical religion, and from facts.

As to that part of the objection, 42 have poses this doctrine to be the serpent preached to Eve, saying not surely die;" it seems almo notice. But as it has been some writers, as unanswerable, cause it was passed over unnoticed, being nothing to the purpose; I shall make a few remarks upon it.

1. I say, that *Satan* was a liar, and God was true. For man and woman did *die*, in a *moral* sense, on the very day that they sinned; they became dead in trespasses and sins; they lost the divine life, and became earthly, sensual, devilish; darkness in their understandings, stubbornness in their wills, and disorder in their affections, rendered them unfit, unable and unworthy to have fellowship with their God. But do they contradict Jehovah, and join with the serpent who asserts, that Jesus, the second Adam, hath quickened, and is able to quicken, those who are dead in trespasses and sins? If so, St. Paul joined with the serpent, in Ephes. ii. 1.

2. The sentence of death was pronounced upon man, even the death of the body, in these words: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Gen. iii. 19. But, would it be just and right for any one to say, that those who believed the resurrection of the body, contradicted God, and joining with the serpent, declared that men should not die; merely, because they asserted according to the promises, that they should rise again? Would not those who preach *Jesus* and the resurrection, have a right to look upon it as a vile and wilful slander, if any one should so misrepresent the matter? What! must I be accused of saying that no man ever died, because I believe and teach that some have risen, and that all shall be raised at last; when the very idea of a resurrection pre-supposes a state of death?

3. I confess, that God has threatened sinners with the second death; but do I say that they shall never taste of the second death, because I declare, that the time will come when it shall exist no more? this is curious reasoning, indeed. As well may I say that no man ever lived on earth, because so many have died; that no one sleeps in the night who wakes in the morning; or that no fish was ever in the water, that was caught and taken out.

Did St. Paul join with the serpent, when he said, "For as in *Adam* all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive?" 1 Cor. xv. 22. Will any suppose that we affirm, that the dreadful threatenings denounced by God, never were, nor ever will be executed, because we declare, that his promises shall also be fulfilled? Can any reasonable man suppose, because Christ is the Saviour of men, that, therefore they were not in a lost condition? How absurd! when he declares, that he came to seek and save the lost!

Thus, though mankind died a moral death,

of the day wherein they sinned; yet, CHRIST is able to quicken and raise them up from the same; and though their bodies die in consequence of the fall, yet shall he cause all that are in the graves to hear his voice, and come forth; and, by the same rule of arguing, though many shall fall under the power of the second death, which is threatened to sinners; yet as he has promised to destroy all that bears the name of *death*, their Restoration may be fairly concluded, without either contradicting God, or joining with the serpent. Had the Scriptures, indeed, contained nothing but threatenings of *death*, without any promises of *salvation*, *resurrection*, or *restoration*; it would have been presumptuous for us to have entertained any hopes for the human race, or their deliverance, either from *sin*, *death*, or *hell*; but since promises are found, as well as *threatenings*, we must not under pretence or colour of believing the *latter*, reject the *former*, lest we are found contradictors and opposers of God: for it is as possible that we may make him a liar, in refusing to believe the record he has given of his Son, and his intentions of grace and mercy towards mankind, as in disregarding his threatenings, denounced against them because of their sins.

As for this doctrine making the *hearts of the righteous sad whom* GOD *would not have made sad*, nothing can be more contrary to fact; for if it be the will of God to reward and punish, and finally to restore mankind, none of the righteous will be sorry, but on the contrary, will greatly rejoice. It is not God's truth, but men's lies, of which the prophet speaks; which made the hearts of the righteous sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life; but we are so far from strengthening the hands of the wicked, and saying, that no evil shall come upon them; that we declare from the Scripture, that "the wrath of GOD is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." Rom. i. 18, ii. 8, 9. And that "there is no peace for the wicked." Isaiah. xlviii. 22, lvii. 20, 21. Therefore they are called to repent, and turn to God; for in sin they never can be happy; no unholy or unclean thing can enter into the kingdom of Heaven. And so far are we from promising them life in their wicked ways that we testify, from the Scripture, that "he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life," while he continues in that state; "but the wrath of God abideth on him." St. John iii. 36.

Friend.—I had intended to propose that text as an objection to your system; it is indeed one that Dr. WHITBY insists much upon: but I see how you will answer it—that the unbeliever, as such, *and while he so continues*, cannot see life; but the wrath of GOD abideth on him, while he remaineth in unbelief; but that God can take away the cause, in his own time, and then the effect shall cease.

Minister.—Certainly, this must be the meaning; for St. John only meant to describe the difference between believers and unbelievers, *as such*: but could not mean to intimate that those who were not unbelievers in his time, should always continue so.

But I now pass to consider the latter part of this objection, upon which I have dwelt so long; viz. that it is the nature of God to lay the highest possible restraint upon sin, and therefore he has threatened it with *everlasting damnation*, which must intend *endless misery*; and as this restraint is found too weak, wholly to prevent evil, what amazing increase would there be, if this restraint should be taken off, in any degree; as it must be, if it should come to be known that punishments were only *for certain ages or periods*, and designed for the *amendment* of the sufferers?

I once asked a reverend divine what was his strongest argument in favour of *endless punishment*? and he told me, that which is mentioned above; and therefore, as it is of considerable importance I shall give it a brief consideration.

1. It is not quite clear to me that it is the nature of God to lay the highest possible restraint upon sin; and that he always doth so in all his dispensations. He sometimes has higher designs in view, than barely to restrain sin; he sometimes, perhaps, suffers it to prevail for a time, that his power might be more manifest in destroying it; hence we read, "Moreover the law entered"—not merely to restrain sin, but "that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Wherefore, then, serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made." Rom. v. 20, 21, Gal. iii. 19. St. Paul says; "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence; for, without the law sin was dead. Was, then that which was good, made death unto me? God forbid: but sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me, by that which is good; that sin, by the commandment, might become exceeding sinful." Rom. vii. 8, 13. Perhaps if the punishment of sins immediately followed the commission of them, it would be a stronger and more effectual restraint than any threatenings of future misery; yet God does not think it necessary to restrain sin by that means, though it is expressly asserted, that, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore is the heart of the sons of men fully set in them to do evil." Eccl. viii. 11. There is no doubt but if the awful punishments of the future state were made visible to our senses, by any means, they would prove a powerful restraint to sin;

yet God has not thought fit to restrain it by those, and perhaps many other possible ways. Wherefore I have a right to doubt the premises; for if the strongest possible restraints were laid upon sin, it might not be so consistent with a state of probation, as those reasonable restraints which God hath thought fit to lay upon it.

2. But it may be questioned, whether there is not something in the idea of limited, yet certain punishment, so just, equitable, reasonable and evident, that it is much more calculated to produce belief, and consequently more effectual to destroy false hopes of escaping it, and also to check that daring presumption, which rises out of the idea of *endless misery*, than can be found in the contrary doctrine. *Endless punishment* seems to shock tender minds at least. I heard of a little boy, to whom his mother constantly kept preaching damnation without end, for every sin; one day after she had been discoursing with him in that manner, he went to work, but soon returned back, suddenly opened the door, and with an air of surprise, cried out; "why, mother, the law says, *An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot;* but you say, ten thousand for one, and that punishment shall never end." I have heard of numbers that had no better excuse for sinning greedily, than this, viz. that there was no hopes of their being saved; that, therefore, they were determined to sin as much as possible, since it could make no difference. I have reason to say, from what I know of mankind, that more persons refuse to believe in Divine Revelation because it is commonly thought to contain the doctrine of endless misery, than from any other cause: And numbers have embraced it immediately upon being fairly convinced that it was not necessary to understand it in that light. And a very sensible Deist once said to an acquaintance of mine, who believed and preached the universal doctrine, "Had I been acquainted with your system, thirty years ago, I should have been a zealous Christian; and as great a friend to Revelation, as I have been an enemy." "And pray why not now, Doctor?" "Because I am ashamed, having been so long fighting against, to receive it now."

3. Though damnation has been commonly understood to be *endless*, for many ages; yet it has not (as far as we can judge) prevented evil at all, or very little; but I have mentioned before, how very strict those people live, who receive and hold the system of limited punishments; whether it is that *endless damnation* is too unnatural to be believed, and that *limited punishments*, being more reasonable, seem more certain; or whether it be that by considering they shall be punished, either without end or not at all; and every one thinking that endless punishment is more than they deserve, but is only reserved for some greater sinners, and therefore they have nothing to fear from it, I shall not pretend to determine; but certain it is, that where the idea of endless misery prevails, it has not prevented iniquity, in the measure that might have been expected, on the supposition of its being the truth of God.

4. The great number of Heathens, that die without ever being favoured with the light of the gospel, and certainly without ever hearing of endless misery; the many that die in a state of infancy and childhood: together with the instances of idiots, and persons born deaf; all convince me more than any logical arguments that God has many ways of instructing and reclaiming his creatures, in another state that we are at present unacquainted with.

5. It is not so much the intention of God, merely to restrain sin as to shew it in all its dreadful deformity, punish it according to its deserts, and finally, to shew the superabounding of his grace, in overcoming and totally destroying it out of his creation; which shall be accomplished when he that sitteth upon the throne shall make all things new; "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Rev. xxi. 4.

6. As the doctrine of the final Restoration has been shewn in itself not to have the least tendency to licentiousness, but directly the reverse; and as far as I can learn, by history, or my own observation, those who have believed it, in the manner here laid down, as perfectly consistent with a future state of rewards and punishments, have been particularly careful to depart from iniquity of every kind; yet if any should be so lost to all that is good, as to pervert this truth (revealed for contrary purposes) to their own destruction, they alone must bear the blame, the loss and the punishment. The Scriptures of truth have been perverted; yet that is no argument against Divine Revelation. The Gospel of the Grace of God, has been abused; but should it never be preached on that account? Some in the apostles' days, turned the Grace of God itself into wantonness and lasciviousness, (See Jude, 4,) and others pretended that those holy men encouraged sin, by proclaiming salvation to sinners, through grace, or faith in Christ; of which St. Paul complains, Rom. iii. 8. "We be slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, let us do evil that good may come: whose damnation is just." The holy apostle abhorred, and constantly denied this horrid consequence, which some perverse minds pretended to draw from his doctrine; he declared that the damnation of such was just, who did sin that grace might abound, or who affirmed that the doctrine led thereto, or that the apostles taught or practised any such things; nevertheless (not as fools, but as wise) they did not think fit to lay the gospel aside and refuse to preach salvation through Christ any more on that account. The selfsame reasoning applies to the present case.

Friend.—I must confess that you have so far prevailed as to silence this great objection; for certainly the belief of the Restoration seems, by your account of it, consistent with

a state of grace, and the knowledge and practice of religion. But though you have obviated several objections, there is one you have not yet touched, which is very considerable, and I am doubtful that it will be difficult, if not impossible for you to answer fairly; it may be thus expressed, *God has abounded towards us in all wisdom*; one instance is his hanging out the threatenings of the severest punishments to prevent his creatures from sinning while in this world; but to tell them at the same time, that if they should sin, he means to save them, is not *prudent*; because that lessens, if not destroys the force of his threatening. He told *Adam* that if he did eat he should surely die; but did not tell him (at the same time) that if he should eat his case would not be remediless; this were to take down with one hand what he had set up with the other. After the threatening failed of the effect, he told him so, and not before, this was prudently done; so after his threatenings fail of effect in this state, is the time to reveal his design of saving daring sinners. We may therefore be sure that he hath not done it yet, and that we misconstrue those texts which seem to contain such a revelation. The next state is the only state to preach the doctrine, and reveal the doctrine. If you preach it here, it will be unnecessary to preach it in hell; for obstinate sinners will carry it in their heads thither.

Minister.—As specious and plausible as this objection seems, I doubt not of being able to answer it fairly, without evading the natural force of it in the least. The first thing that I shall notice in this objection, is the very different and contrary manner in which you apply those words of the apostle from his first evident intention. *He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.* Ephes. i. 8–10. God hath judged it to be the height of heavenly wisdom and prudence to make known to his saints, his glorious purpose, finally to re-head all things in Christ; and we ought not to presume to be more wise and prudent than he. There is no doubt but God hath revealed this great truth more immediately to his saints and faithful ones for their consolation, than for the benefit of the finally impenitent.

It is of amazing, I had almost said of infinite use to the people of God, to have this divine counsel declared to them in the present time.

The knowledge of this truth entirely removes all hard thoughts of God from the minds of those who received it, as I can testify by experience; for since I have believed in the doctrine of the Universal Restoration, I have never had one hard thought of God abiding for one minute in my mind that I remember, and never expect to have any more while I continue to believe it firmly.

The belief of the Restoration is of grea use in supporting good people under thei sorrows and trials here; the idea that evi shall be destroyed, and all things restored t their primitive glory is the most consolator of all other ideas. As this doctrine tends t remove the greatest difficulties from the pla of Providence, and also from divine Revela tion, it is evident that the knowledge of it mus be of the greatest use to all that love thei great Creator. And, therefore, if the revelatio of it answered no other purpose in this life but for the happiness, joy, and satisfaction c such as love God, we might be sure that h hath made it known, and that we rightly ur derstand those passages that hold it forth; fc since "the secret of the Lord is with ther that fear him, and he will show them hi covenant," Psal. xxv. 14, and "The Lor God will do nothing, but he revealeth hi secrets unto his servants, the prophets," Amo iii. 7, there is all the reason to conclude, that i God ever intended to restore mankind herea ter, he would not fail to reveal it to his chose and faithful servants. And this he hath done if I can understand the meaning of words.

It is true that God did not inform our firs parents before they sinned that he had provide a remedy; but not long did he delay after th fall to reveal to them, that the seed of th woman should bruise the serpent's head Gen. iii. 15, and this one text contains i miniature all that I believe respecting th Restoration of mankind; for if the serpent' head is finally to be bruised, his power an influence over mankind, must be entirel destroyed; and then what shall prevent thei return to God.

Besides, it is impossible to read the Scrip tures attentively, and not perceive that Go very frequently mixes promises of mercie among his severest threatenings of judgment and yet he doth not throw down with on hand, what he builds up with the other.

Your objection seems to suppose that th doctrine of the Restoration supercedes and set aside those punishments which God has threat ened to inflict upon the impenitent; or els how does the preaching of this doctrin weaken the force of the threatenings? But thi is a very false idea; for we acknowledge tha the threatenings shall be fulfilled, and not tha the disobedient shall escape unpunished There is a great deal of difference betwee these two ideas, though you would intimat them to be the same, and that we contradic God by assuring the wicked that they shal escape the just judgment of God. But w only declare that an end shall finally come t their punishment, and that when they shall b sufficiently humbled a dispensation of merc shall succeed that of judgment. Let me as you, has not God threatened mankind wit death on the account of sin? "Dust thou a and unto dust thou shalt return." Gen. ii 19. Well, tell me, is this threatening eithe weakened or destroyed by the knowledge o the great doctrine of the resurrection of th dead? Did not God threaten the children o

breal with dreadful judgments to prevent their sinning, and that they should be dispersed among all nations? But will you say that he either weakened or destroyed the force of his threatenings, because he promised them at the time that at least he would return their captivity, and restore them as at the first, and do better unto them than at the beginning.

The laws of this country condemn criminals to death; would it be thought that I should weaken or destroy the force of the penal statutes, by saying, that the execution of their law could only be felt for a certain time, beyond which it could not endure? Is not every malefactor under the sentence of death supposed to know this? And yet will any presume to say, that these laws are entirely weakened, and their force destroyed because they do not condemn transgressors to endless punishments? But, if it be allowed that torments, which are but momentary have a considerable influence in restraining many vices, there cannot be the smallest reason to fear that the doctrine of just retribution according to the deeds done in the body, will open the door to vice and immorality, but on the contrary. But this objection is so near akin to the last which you proposed, that it hardly deserves a distinct consideration; for if the doctrine of the Restoration does not lead men to commit sin (as I am sure it has no such tendency) then no harm can be apprehended from its being known in this state. And whereas you argue, that as it would not be proper for the present state, we may be sure that God hath not revealed it; and therefore is highly proper for men to know in the present state. You will please therefore to notice that the universal doctrine, so far from tending to render the divine threatenings useless or vain, weakening their force, or setting them aside, operates in the direct contrary manner. I as much believe as you or any other man can do, that all the threatenings will be fulfilled upon the finally impenitent; but dare not carry the matter so far as to set aside the gracious promises of God, with which the Scriptures appear to me to abound, in favour of the final recovery of all at last.

Friend.—It must I think be confessed that if the doctrine of the Restoration be true, it would be matter of great joy and comfort for good men to know it, for they have often great trouble and anxiety of mind on the account of their families, friends, neighbours, acquaintance, and mankind in general; which sorrow would be greatly relieved, could they have an idea of the Restoration of all things in the manner you hold it. But however true this may be, it seems not to be plainly revealed in the Scripture, otherwise it would not be hidden from the eyes of so many great and good men.

Minister.—It is possible that a subject may be revealed in the plainest manner, and yet the best of men may remain ignorant of it? For instance, were not the sufferings, death, and resurrection of our Lord plainly revealed in the Scriptures of the old Testament? And yet we know that the apostles of our Saviour did not understand one of these prophecies. Nay, when Jesus told them openly and expressly that he must be delivered into the hands of men, and that they should mock, scourge, and crucify him, and that the third day he should rise again, they did not comprehend his meaning; although he spoke to them frequently and very plainly upon the subject, and said, "Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not; and they feared to ask him of that saying." St. Luke ix. 44, 45. And in another place we read, "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, the Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." It is impossible that words could be more express, or less liable to be misunderstood. "But (as the evangelist immediately informs us) "they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him." St. Mark ix. 31, 32. And in the same chapter we find, that after our Lord Jesus was transfigured upon the mount in the presence of Peter, James, and John, "As they came down from the mountain he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." Ver. 9, 10. This was what Christ taught them not only plainly, but also frequently. See St. Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 9, 22, 23, xx. 17–19, xxvi. 31, 32, St. Mark viii. 31, ix. 9, 10, 31, 32, x. 32–34, xiv. 27, 28, St. Luke ix. 21, 22, 44, 45, xviii. 31–34.

Yet notwithstanding the plainness and frequency of these predictions, and the pains which Christ took to instil these ideas into them, they never understood them at all until some time after they were fulfilled. For when they saw him taken and delivered into the hands of men, and treated exactly according to his own words often repeated, they were entirely disappointed, and all their hopes seemed to die within them. And when he was risen from the dead, they would not believe the testimony of those who had seen him, and would hardly trust their own senses, so ignorant were they of what he had told them.

St. John was the first of the disciples who believed that he was risen, for thus he writes; "Then went in also that other disciple, who came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead." St. John xx. 8, 9. This instance is so much to my purpose, and proves so evidently that a thing may be plainly revealed, and expressed in the plainest manner, and yet not be understood, that I hardly need mention any more. But I will mention another, and that is, the calling of the Gentiles.

This was spoken of by the prophets, in the clearest language; and Jesus after his resurrection gave a full commission to his apostles which one would think it was impossible for them to misunderstand.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore and teach all nations," &c. St. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." St. Mark xvi. 15.

"Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." St, Luke xxiv. 46–48. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts i. 8. But the apostles themselves, even after the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, were without understanding, respecting the calling of the Gentiles, until St. Peter was taught it by a vision from heaven. See Acts x.

And St. Paul speaks of this subject as a mystery that was hid from ages and generations, and particularly revealed to him, and not to the saints in that day. See Ephesians iii. 1–11; Col. i. 25–27.

Wherefore, when I consider that the apostles themselves could not for a time see those things to be revealed, which yet were most plainly, fully, and frequently told them, I cannot wonder that many great and good men now should not see the general Redemption and final Restoration of all things plainly revealed in the Scriptures, though to me scarce any subject appears more evident. It gives me now but little concern to hear many say, that they cannot see the matter plainly declared in the Bible, since I know that things have been there that wise and good men could not see; and what has happened in times past may take place now; and if I can see for myself this great truth made known, it is enough for me. I am not to inquire, what does this man believe? Or, what shall the other do? I must believe what the Scripture appears to me to teach, and do what I am there commanded, let others believe or do as they may.

Friend.—But I have heard some say of you, "How comes this man to know more than all the world? Have there not been many great, wise and good men in all ages, that have never thought of these things? If this doctrine of the final Restoration of all things had been true, surely our wise, good and learned ministers would have discovered it, and proclaimed it long ago. But the doctrine of endless misery is a point in which they seem generally to agree, however they differ in other matters, and therefore it must be true, and this doctrine of the general Restoration, which this man holds up, almost alone, must be false."

Minister.—I am very far from pretending to be wiser than any that have gone before me; and as for this doctrine of the Restoration, it was not only believed and preached by the apostles, but many of the ancient fathers who lived in the first ages of Christianity, were bold witnesses for this glorious truth. It is true that when the church of Rome rose to supreme power, the Popes and Councils endeavoured to extirpate the *merciful doctors* (as those who believed the general Restoration, were called in derision) and their adherents, but it was not until near the close of the seventh century, that they were able to silence the witnesses for this truth. This, (as well as many other precious truths) then lay hid until the reformation, when it began a little to revive, and hath gradually increased ever since. Several great authors have written upon it; many hundreds and even thousands, have believed it, and found comfort and joy therein. Nay, there are many ministers who believe it now as firmly as I do, but do not choose to confess or preach it, for various reasons; and great numbers of private Christians enjoy the comfort and happiness of believing it secretly. But put the case that I stood alone in this testimony, yet if upon a fair examination, the Scriptures hold forth this idea, and if all objections against it may be fully answered; why should my testimony be refused on the account of its singularity? God has an absolute right to use what means or instruments he pleases, to manifest his truth, and to fulfil his purposes; and though I am nothing, and in his sight am less than nothing, yet he is able by the things that are not, to confound and bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. 1 Cor. i. 28, 29.

I acknowledge that the generality of the ministers in the present day profess to believe endless misery, though they disagree in other points; and indeed one reason why they fall out so much about other doctrines, is, because they receive this as a first principle, as is very obvious; for were those that believe that Christ died only for a part of mankind, once to give up the idea of endless misery, they would acknowledge the universality of the love of God, and confess that Jesus died for all in the fullest sense. And on the other hand, if those who believe in general Redemption, were not so exceedingly tenacious of the doctrine of endless misery, they would not oppose the doctrine of election, nor hold that the will of God might be finally frustrated, and that the death of Christ shall be in vain, with respect to many, and that many objects of the divine love shall finally perish to all eternity.

These inconsistencies in their sentiments, and the contest between them and those who hold partial redemption and salvation, are therefore chiefly, if not wholly owing to both parties being agreed in this most dreadful doctrine of endless misery.

It is beautiful to observe the progress of the glorious gospel, from its opening to our first parents in the garden, down to the present

day. I have sometimes mentioned, in public, that the more the gospel is known and revealed, the larger and richer it appears.

It first seemed confined to one family of nation, bur later discoveries showed that all nations had a part therein, and all sorts of people were designed to share in its blessings. Now the glorious news begins to be published abroad, not only that all nations, and all sorts of people, but all persons and individuals without exception, not only *may* partake of its benefits, but *shall* in due time enjoy great advantages thereby.

God always adapts his remedies to the evils that prevail in the world: and therefore he hath opened his counsels to men according to their different capacities, needs, and circumstances. Christianity might, formerly, have been received and sincerely practised, without being investigated at all; but when infidelity rises up and attacks it, as it does in this our age, it becomes the duty of its friends to defend it, by inquiring into its meaning; and laying all prejudices aside, to receive as truth those things which God hath revealed; and the same to vindicate before the world.

It might not formerly have been necessary to understand all the prophecies; and yet now, as the time of their fulfilment draws nigh, they may become more important, be more studied, and better understood; and for this purpose, God may actually illuminate the minds of some to set them forth in a more rational, scriptural and consistent manner, than they have appeared in hitherto. And if it should please God to make any use of my tongue or pen for this great purpose, the glory shall all be ascribed to his name, to whom alone it is due; I shall have nothing to glory or boast of, forasmuch as I can only communicate what I receive; and I hope none will refuse to receive the truth, however weak or unworthy the instrument by which God may please to send it.

Friend.—If this is the truth which you hold forth, however contrary to the commonly received opinions of the age, I see no reason why men should refuse to hear what you have to say, but I have heard many exclaim against you in the severest manner; and declare that they would not hear you, nor read your writings on any account; and others have said that they could confute and overthrow your whole system in ten minutes, but whether they would be able to make their words good if they should enter the lists with you is another matter, and cannot be determined till a fair trial.

Minister.—I can assure you, my friend, that I shall not have the least objection to their making the attempt; for though I am conscious that neither my natural nor acquired abilities, are worthy to be compared to those of many excellent characters who hold the contrary sentiments; yet the goodness of the cause in which I am engaged, inspires me with courage to attempt its vindication, let who will enter the list with me. For when the evidence of this most glorious truth first began to appear to my mind, I was determined never to believe or profess it, until I could answer every objection that could be brought from the Scriptures against it, fairly and without any torturing or twisting the words of truth; and it pleased God so to open matters to my view, as to take every objection out of my mind, and to clear up every doubt in such a manner that I have full satisfaction. And I can safely say, in the fear of God, that I am so far from being offended with those who question me upon the matter, and thereby give me an opportunity of answering for myself, that I take it as an act of kindness; and as I stand ready to be reproved wherein I am out of the way, so I shall thank the person who, in the spirit of love, convinces me of error. "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be kindness; and let them reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." But let not the man who would write, dip his pen in gall; nor he that would converse, make his tongue as a sharp sword; but, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel with any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts." These are the tempers of mind we ought always to possess; and especially when we discourse upon the great things of the kingdom of God.

Friend.—I have the same desires that you express; and I think it is the shame of human nature, and a reproach to the innocent cause of Christianity, that religious disputes have been carried on with such amazing bitterness and acrimony. Men seem frequently to forget that they are brethren, and that they must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. If they remembered these things as they ought, they would not revile, censure, judge, and condemn each other, as they do; from which evil practices may the good Lord preserve us while we debate this very important subject; for though I am determined to urge every thing that I can with propriety, in the strongest manner that I am able, yet I am willing to stipulate on my part, that if I should use any reproachful or censorious language in the remainder of the debate, I will give you leave to consider it as totally giving up the cause in which I am engaged.

Minister.—And I hereby promise the same; for I am determined never to write a page of controversy, unless it can be written in the very spirit of love and true benevolence, with a sincere desire to find and embrace the truth.

› want of this in most controversial wri-
ıas made serious people so weary of
›versy, that they will neither read nor
t on any account; nor can I wonder at
such bitterness tends entirely to root
e spirit of true religion.

end.—I hope we shall shew an example
nkind, how disputes ought to be carried on in love, and in the fear of God, and for the purpose of mutual edification. But as our present discourse has been long and very important, I will take my leave of you for this time, hoping at a future opportunity to have more conversation with you on this so interesting a subject.

CONTENTS OF DIALOGUE IV.

ECTION.—Christ threatens the Jews that they should die in their sins, and that they could not whither he went.

SWER.—Our Lord told his disciples themselves that whither he went, they could not come, ı, then, as afterwards explained. 2. There are blessings promised in Scripture, to all Israel, ut exception. 3. Those that have been rejected and cast off shall at last return and be re-l.

JECTION.—That the blessings promised only respect those that shall be found alive on the at a certain time.

SWER.—The inhabitants of Sodom, Samaria, and Jerusalem, with their daughters, or neigh-ıg cities, shall all be restored, though destroyed long ago. 2. That all things are given to t without exception; and that all that are given shall at last come to him in such a manner as be cast out. From which promises, the Universal Restoration is inferred, and proved to be nly true.

JECTION.—God sware in his wrath that the Israelites should not enter into his rest.

SWER.—The rest was the land of Canaan, being typical of the time of the Millennium, or Christ's on earth, and not of the ultimate state of happiness.

JECTION.—There are some of whom we read, that he that made them will not have mercy upon , and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

'SWER.—These words must necessarily be understood with some limitation, and refer to a par-r season, when they shall have judgment without mercy, but finally mercy shall rejoice against ıent.

JECTION.—That the wicked shall never see light.

SWER.—Not until subdued, or overcome, as the words ought to be rendered.

JECTION.—A great ransom cannot deliver those who are taken away by the stroke of God.

NSWER.—The great ransom cannot intend the blood of Christ, tho power of which is unlimited, ›ld, and all the forces of strength, riches, wisdom, &c., none of these can deliver their posses-rom death.

JECTION.—Solomon says, that there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the ; and that in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

SWER.—The first part of this objection respects only the state of the body in the grave, but ıt be brought to disprove the consciousness of the soul in a separate state, the resurrection of ›dy, a future state of existence, or the final Restoration. The second part of this objection has ıe least relation to the subject; but belongs to quite another matter.

JECTION.—The living have hope, but the dead have none, their love, hatred, envy, &c., are per-

SWER.—This belongs to the present life, and to the state of the body in the grave, but forms no ion against the Restoration.

JECTION.—Our Saviour has said, the night cometh when no man can work.

SWER.—Our Lord was diligent in his work, and we ought to be so in our labours on earth, to ı death will put an end.

JECTION.—Many terrible passages of Scripture brought to prove the destruction and future mise-he wicked.

SWER.—The Scriptures are an unanswerable objection to those who deny a future state of retri-ı, but not so to the scriptural doctrine of the general Restoration.

ESTION.—But does not punishment harden and inflame, instead of soften and subdue the crim-

SWER.—Punishment to a certain degree produces the former effects, but in greater degrees and : continued, produces the latter.

JECTION.—The deplorable state of wicked men, their aversion to good, their love of vice, their ess of heart, and opposition to every method taken to reclaim them, seem to render their Res-›n an event hardly to be hoped for.

SWER.—However difficult it may be for our reason to admit the possibility of such monsters of ıy being changed and restored, yet nothing is too hard for God, and therefore faith may lay hold ı promises, which he hath graciously given us for our encouragement.

JECTION.—There will come a time when the characters of all men will be so fixed and confirmed, › change can afterwards take place upon them. He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and t is filthy, let him be filthy still, &c.

SWERED.—1. By considering the words as belonging to a certain period, and by the consideration ay other scriptural passages of a like import. 2. By comparison; as even the most holy crea-

tures are unclean, compared with God, so those who remain filthy and unclean, during the present life, may be so esteemed hereafter, in comparison of those holy souls, who have purged themselves from all uncleanliness here, shall be reckoned as vessels of the highest honour in the house of God.

Objection.—Those who add or diminish shall have the plagues added to them, or their part taken out of the book of life, &c.

Answer.—This is no objection to the general Restoration, but is a solemn warning for us to take heed that we do not fall under those dreadful punishments which await unbelievers and profane persons, nor lose those inestimable blessings which Christ has promised to the faithful, obedient, overcomers, &c. The reflections cast upon the doctrine of the restoration by its opponents shewn to be highly absurd. The doctrine of annihilation considered. There can be but three things possible; endless misery, total annihilation, or the Restoration. The doctrine of annihilation, or a final state of non-existence, proved unscriptural. 1. By the wicked being actually tormented for a long season, ages of ages. 2. Because they are destroyed, not that they might cease to exist any more, but that they might come to know the Lord. 3. By the unexceptionable instance of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c., who were so long ago destroyed, and yet shall have their captivity returned. The promises made respecting Sodom and Gomorrah, &c., prove the doctrines of annihilation and endless misery, both to be erroneous and the restoration alone to be true.

An objection taken from Mr. B——'s sermon that sinners in hell, will be always under the necessity of committing fresh sin, therefore God will be obliged to continue their punishment to all eternity.

Answered.—The objection unscriptural, merely a rash conjecture, totally unfounded. The scripture represents future punishment as the reward of sins committed in this world. Their intention is to destroy sin, and consequently will cause it to cease from being committed. Whatever rage punishments may at first seem to provoke, they must continue until the most rebellious are entirely subdued.

The last objection. That sin is infinite, being against an infinite object, containing infinite hatefulness, and justly deserves infinite punishment; and which cannot be fully executed, and therefore endless misery must be their portion.

This objection largely answered. 1. By shewing the absurdity of ascribing infinite actions to creatures. 2. Acts of the highest goodness do not extend to God, cannot be infinite, much less can evil actions be infinite. 3. Though iniquities are once in Scripture styled infinite, yet it is evident from the whole passage compared with other parts of Scripture, that infinite is only used for a great multitude. 4. The idea of every sin being absolutely infinite, and deserving infinite punishment or endless misery, entirely confounds and destroys all the different kinds and degrees of sin, and all those distinctions which God hath made and revealed to us in the Scriptures. 5. God threatens to punish sinners for all their sins; and to render their sin and iniquity double upon them: and yet promises to be gracious to them after all, &c. 6. Even allowing that sin is naturally infinite, and deserves infinite punishment, that will not prove that any of the human race must be miserable without end, &c. Eight reasons given why the author sometimes treats in public upon the doctrine of the Universal Restoration. Eleven reasons mentioned why the author doth not speak of it more frequently and fully in his public discourses.

DIALOGUE IV.

Friend.—I am happy to have another opportunity of discoursing with you, concerning that point in which you differ from your brethren, the final Restoration of all things. I have thought much of the subject since I saw you; and though I must acknowledge, that you have answered as far as I can see, some of the greatest objections that I have found in the Scriptures; yet a considerable number remain to be answered, before I can venture to receive as truth what I have hitherto looked upon as a *dangerous heresy;* and as I have many questions to propose, I wish to make the best use of my time.

Minister.—Propose your objections, as freely as you please; and I will endeavour to answer them as briefly, and at the same time as plainly as possible.

Friend.—Christ threatens the *Jews* with an eternal exclusion from his presence. "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come." St. John vii. 34. Then said Jesus again unto them, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go ye cannot come. Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." St. John viii. 21, 23, 24.

Minister.—Do you recollect that our Lord uses words nearly similar to some of these, to his own disciples?

Friend.—No, indeed; I do not remember any such like expressions used to them. Can you shew them to me?

Minister.—If I do, will you acknowledge the force of the objection to be removed?

Friend.—Certainly, I must.

Minister.—Then read St. John xiii. 33. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me, and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you."

Friend.—I am surprised that I should never have observed this before.—Let me read the passage.—Oh! but stop—it is explained in the 36th verse. "Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." But nothing of the kind is intimated respecting the *Jews.*

Minister.—Not in that text, I confess; but in many others it is more than intimated, that they shall come to know and love him, yea and to behold him as their friend. I think it is intimated in those words which our Saviour used, in the close of his threatenings to Jerusalem. Behold your house is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, ye shall

not see me henceforth, until the time come when ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." St. Matth. xxiii. 38, 39; St. Luke xiii. 35. It is more than intimated in these words: "And so *all Israel* shall be saved. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all." Rom. xi. 26, 32. "In Jehovah shall *all* the seed of *Israel* be justified and shall glory," Isai. xlv. 25. "I will call them my people, who were not my people; and her beloved, that was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God." Rom. ix. 25, 26. "Now will I bring again the captivity of *Jacob*, and have mercy upon the *whole* house of *Israel*; I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them." Ezek. xxxix. 25, 28. "And I will multiply men unto you, (the mountains of Israel) all the house of *Israel*, even all of it." xxxvi. 10. "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land; then shall ye know that I, Jehovah, have spoken it, and performed it, saith Jehovah." xxxvii. 12–14.

Friend.—But this returning from captivity can only respect such as are alive at that period, when the Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people from Assyria, &c.

Minister.—That is more than any one can prove; as the expression is sometimes used evidently for the restoration of such whose bodies are destroyed beyond dispute; as in the case of *Sodom* and her daughters, who were taken away, by fire and brimstone from Heaven, whose captivity God promises to return, together with the captivity of *Samaria*, and her daughters, at the same time that he will bring again the captivity of *Jerusalem*, and her daughters in the midst of them. See Exek. xvi. 44, 63; especially v. 53, 55, 61.

Friend.—But Mr. Poole's continuators, as well as many other eminent divines, tell us, that these which you take to be promises, are only dreadful threatenings; and their meaning is this:—I never will bring again the captivity of *Samaria*, and her daughters; nor the captivity of *Sodom*, and her daughters; neither will I ever bring again the captivity of *thy captives*, in the midst of them; when *Sodom* and her daughters shall return to their former estate (which is impossible) and *Samaria* and her daughters shall return to their former estate (which shall never be) then *thou* and thy daughters shall return to your former estate; but that time shall never come.

Minister.—I know, such is their interpretation, which proves nothing more than the weakness of their cause; for in all this, they expressly contradict God, who, from the 60th verse to the end of the chapter, promises blessings to Jerusalem in the most absolute manner, that he will remember the covenant made with her in the days of her youth, and will establish unto her an everlasting covenant: that she shall receive her sisters, *Samaria* and *Sodom* (called her *elder* and her *younger* sister;) and he promises to give them to her for daughters; not by the first covenant, indeed, but by the new and everlasting covenant, which he will make in those days; then shall the covenant be firmly established with her; she shall know Jehovah; shall remember, and be confounded; and never shall open her mouth in pride any more, because of her former sin and shame, when God shall be pacified toward her, for all that she hath done.

How many promises has God made to *Jerusalem*, in the prophecies, of not only bringing her *captivity*, and returning her to her former *estate*; but even causing greater blessings than ever to come to her, and of doing *better* to her than in her beginning, making her an *eternal excellency*, a joy of *many generations*, &c.

It is therefore very surprising that men professing to believe the Bible, should dare be so bold as to deny these promises, and declare that God will never bring *Jerusalem* to her former estate! They might, indeed, safely say, that the promises have not yet been fulfilled; but it is too bold to assert that therefore, they will never be accomplished. Were there no other text to prove the restoration of the Jews who died in their sins, and indeed of the whole fallen race of Adam, I should judge this sufficient;—"*All* that the *Father giveth me, shall come to me*; and he that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the *Father's* will, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again at the last day." St. John. vi. 37–39. Here we find that *Christ* our *Lord*, declares not only that all that the *Father giveth* him *shall come* to him; but also, that they shall come in such a manner as in no wise to be *cast out*; that such is the *Father's* will, that nothing of all which he hath given to the *Son* should be lost or missing, at the great day when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, who did put all things under him; and as this is the will of that *God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will* and as Christ has undertaken the accomplishment of this will of the Father, it concludes absolutely and forcibly against the doctrine of *endless misery* and *annihilation*.

Friend.—It certainly does, with respect to all those whom the Father giveth, or hath given to the *Son*; but to none else.

Minister.—That is all that I contend for; I ground the Universal Restoration of all things, upon these two premises, which I call the *major* and the *minor*. 1. That *all things* are given to the *Son*, without exception. 2. That *all* that are *given him, shall come to him*, in

such a manner as *not to be cast out;* and that none shall be missing, lost, or wholly destroyed, but shall be forthcoming, in that great day when *Christ* shall give up the kingdom to the *Father*.

Friend.—But can you prove your *major?* I am sensible that the *minor* has been the great foundation upon which *particular redemption*, &c., has been supported; but if the *major* can be proved, it will set the strongest weapons of those who hold *partial decrees*, &c., directly against them, and will give another turn to the argument.

Minister.—I can prove the *major* by the same positive expressions as the *minor*, and by more passages of Scripture; and you shall judge for yourself, whether I quote them fairly, and whether they can be invalidated by any arguments which will not, at the same time invalidate the *minor*. I will set down the several texts at large, as they are of great importance.

St. Matth. xi. 27. "*All things* are delivered unto me of my *Father;* and no man knoweth the *Son* but the *Father;* neither knoweth any man the *Father*, save the *Son*, and to whomsoever the *Son* will reveal him." The very same words are mentioned by St. Luke. See chap. x. 22.

But the most striking passages of this kind are found in the gospel of St. John iii. 35, and xiii. 3. "The *Father* loveth the *Son*, and hath given *all things* into his hands. *Jesus* knowing that the Father had given *all things* into his hands, and that he was come from *God*, and went to *God*, &c."

God, hath moreover said to his *Son*, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Psal. ii. 8.

Thus, *all things* are given to Christ without exception. The *major* and *minor* being both proved from Scripture, we may venture to draw this conclusion.

If *all things* are given into the hands of Christ, by the Father; and all that the Father giveth, or hath given, shall come to Christ, in such a manner as not to be cast out; then shall all men be restored.

Here the whole Christian world may unite, without either party being obliged to gve up their favourite tenets; and while some strongly contend, and prove from Scripture, that *all things* are delivered into the hands of *Jesus:* let the others go on to prove, that *all* that the Father giveth, shall come in such a manner as not to be cast out: thus shall the truth be promoted mutually and equally, by those who seem to coutradict each other; but neither shall, in that case, contradict what our Lord hath said.

But as *all things*, or all men, without exception, are given to *Jesus*, that he might restore, or bring them back to God, in his own way and time; so is he invested with all power, that he might be able to accomplish so great a work. Jesus spake, saying "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth." St. Matth. xxviii. 18. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." St. John v. 26, 27. Jesus our Lord, has power to quicken souls who are dead in trespasses and sins. See Ephes. ii. 1. He himself saith; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." St. John v. 25. He hath power to raise all the dead that are in the graves: for he saith "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation," verse 29. But he has not only power to raise the dead and quicken whom he will; to give rewards to them that love him, and to pass sentence of judgment and condemnation upon his foes, and they that have done evil; but has also power to subdue all things unto himself, to reconcile all things, and to rehead all things in himself. And whatever methods he may use towards mankind, and whatever miseries he may suffer them to feel for their sins, and how long soever the dreadful age of judgment and fiery indignation may last, Christ has given us to understand, in his prayer to the Father, that the power which he hath, was given with a design far superior to this, (though judgment is included) he saith (in that address which for its grandeur, beauty, simplicity, and majesty never was equalled) "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many (*pan* ALL) as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." St. John xvii. 2. 3. Here we see, that this power over all flesh was given him for this grand purpose, that ultimately he might give eternal life; not only endless existence, but the knowledge of God and his Christ, to all that the Father hath given him; which are all without exception. This is the will of God, that of all which he hath given the Son, he should lose nothing; but should give eternal life, even the knowledge of God, which he alone can give, to all, without reserve, whom the Father hath given him; this is the will which Christ came to do, and this he hath power to perform. Now, if he came purposely to do the will of God; and if it is the will of God, that of all that the Father hath given to the Son, he should lose nothing; but should bring all to himself, in such a manner as that they should not be cast out, and give them all eternal life; and if all, without reserve are given to him, and universal power and dominion are his, for this very purpose; if all these premises are true—as who can

deny?—then nothing can be more evident, than this conclusion, viz. that *all shall be at last restored.*

"It is written in the prophets, (saith Jesus) and they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." St. John vi. 45. If all shall be taught of God; and all that are taught shall come to Christ; and none that come to him shall be cast out or rejected; if all these premises are true (and, I think, they are fully proved) how very naturally the conclusion follows, viz. that all shall be finally brought home to God, before Christ shall resign the kingdom to the Father.

Our blessed Lord is invested with power sufficient to perform this work. It is the will of God that it should be done; Christ came into the world on purpose to begin, and lay a foundation for the same; he hath laid a sufficient foundation, by tasting death for all; one died for all; he gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time; and he seemed confident that he should be able to accomplish this will of the Father, when he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me." St. John xii. 32. He was lifted up from the earth, and therefore the IF is now no more; he will certainly draw all unto himself, and give eternal life, or the knowledge of God to all. *He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.* And who can conceive how much it will take to satisfy the capacious soul of the Son of God, and especially after having borne such deadly pains for all?

These passages, my friend, establish my mind in the belief of the final universal Restitution, beyond all hesitation; nevertheless, I would not wish to force your assent, were it in my power, but only to lay before you that evidence which was wrought upon me, and has brought me over, notwithstanding my education, prejudices, former sentiments, custom, the multitude, my interest, my honour, and connexions, were all against it.

Friend.—I suppose you know the expositions that are given by the generality of expositors upon all these texts; and it is a fact that thousands and millions of great and good men have read them, many have preached from them, and yet never saw any thing like the universal Restoration contained in them; but if the doctrine be true, and be at all intended to be set forth in the Scriptures, I must suppose that the passages you have mentioned, may allude to it; but I have many objections yet to propose, which must be fairly answered before I can receive it.

Minister.—I would choose you should propose every objection that you can, especially those that may be brought from the sacred page; not only for your own satisfaction, but lest any should be led to suppose that objections of the greatest force are purposely kept back, because no solid answers could be found; whereas I am desirous of hearing whatever can be fairly urged from the Scri tures against this view, and make no doul of being able to shew, that all may be full answered.

Friend.—What do you think of those pa sages, where GOD is represented as swearin in his wrath that unbelievers shall not ent into his rest, which are found in Psal. xc 11, Heb. iii. 11, 18, 19, ch. iv. 3, 6, com pared with Numb. xiv. Do they not see to cut off all hope of the restoration of thos who die in their sins?

Minister.—By the *rest* that was promise to the children of Israel, which they forfeite by their unbelief, we must understand t land of *Canaan*, and not the final state of ha piness. For who can suppose, that out more than six hundred thousand men, beside women, only two will be saved? and th even *Moses* and *Aaron*, those saints of t Lord, will be lost among the rest? For the as well as others, entered not in; becaus they believed not God to sanctify him befo the congregation: (See Numb. xx. 12.) onl *Caleb* and *Joshua* entered into that *rest*, for the followed the *Lord* fully; and they are typic of those who shall follow the Lamb in a ages, so as to obtain a part in the *first resu rection*, over whom the second death shall ha no power; they who are called, and faithfu and are *overcomers*, shall reign with Christ earth during the *Millenium*, which is the *re* that was pointed out by the land of *Canaan*.

Friend.—Is it indeed? We have common understood that *rest* which the children Israel had in the promised land, as typical Heaven and eternal felicity.

Minister.—This cannot be, since it is ev dent that mighty wars were waged, a dreadful battles fought, thirty-one kings, a kingdoms were conquered and subdued Joshua and the Israelites, after they pas ed over Jordan; it was not a perfect *re* but only a type of that keeping of the Sabba which remains for the people of GOD, in which we are exhorted to enter; which is t time when our *Lord*, after having conquere the nations of the earth, shall reign for a *tho sand years*, before the second resurrectio but as many of the Israelites may be saved the day of the Lord, whose carcasses fell the wilderness; so, likewise, shall the nam of many be found in the book of life, at th general judgment, when the dead, small a great, shall stand before GOD, who were n worthy to have a part in the first resurrectio These passages, therefore, conclude strong against *those* having a part in the first resu rection; but nothing against the final Rest ration, which is a state far beyond, and belong to another dispensation.

Friend.—This is quite a different commen from what I ever heard before; but allowin this objection to be answered, I have anoth in my mind, that appears very difficult, and should be glad to know what you can say u on it; it is drawn from Isaiah xxvii. 11— "For it is a people of no understanding

therefore, he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour." How can they ever be restored, if God will not have mercy upon them, nor shew any favour?

Minister.—If we did not understand these words with some limitation, it would be as difficult to reconcile them with other passages of Scripture, as with the doctrine of the Restoration; but if we only limit the time, all is easy; "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy;" nevertheless it is added, "but mercy rojoiceth against judgment." James ii. 13. The way I answer all these threatenings, and shew them to be consistent with that boundless mercy of God, that is over all his works, is, to shew that both wrath, and mercy have their season; that *anger endureth* but a moment, but that *mercy endureth forever*; which glorious declaration is expressed more than forty times in the Scriptures; and that God frequently threatens the greatest judgments, and promises the greatest mercies, to the same people and persons. "Thus saith Jehovah, thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up; thou hast no healing medicines. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased. Why criest thou for thine affliction? Thy sorrow is incurable, for the multitude of thine iniqnity; because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee." Now, who would not think, from reading these words, that these people were in a most hopeless state, beyond the reach of mercy; and that it was in vain even for them to seek it? And yet the very next words speak a language directly contrary: "Therefore all they that devour thee, shall be devoured, &c. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith Jehovah: because they called thee an outcast, saying, this is *Zion*, whom no man seeketh after." See Jer. xxx. 12, 17. I could justify this observation by hundreds of passages wherein God threatens his people with judgments the most severe, and declares, that his eyes shall not pity, nor his arm save; that he will visit their transgressions upon them, will utterly cast them off, and will not have compassion on them at all; and then such promises of mercy break out as are sufficient to astonish every one with their greatness. But time would fail to quote them at large. God, by Hosea, says, "I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away. For ye are not my people, and I will not be your God." And then immediately says, speaking of a time to come, "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, "Ye are the sons of the living God." See Hosea, i. 6, 9, 10.

The whole prophecy, indeed, seems of a piece with this specimen. In the second chapter it is said, "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband; and I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms." Then he goes on to pronounce many dreadful threatenings; but the chapter closes with the most amazing promises of mercies to the same people, under the similitude of a wife that had been rejected, and after a long time received again. "And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. And I will sow her unto me in the earth, and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them who were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God. See Hos. ii. 2, 4, 19–23. Thus the objection admits of a fair and rational answer; and I have been the larger upon it, because I judged it of great importance to clear it up thoroughly; but more passages upon this subject are needless, or I could easily produce great numbers, that speak the same purpose.

Friend.—You have seemed to come over this objection rather better than I could have expected, but I must beg leave to ask you, what you do with that passage, (Ps. xlix. 19) "He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light?"

Minister.—I render the words *gnad natzah*, "until subdued and overcome, they shall not see the light, *or*, until the age, or a certain period, they shall not see the light." The same words are used in Job xxxiv. 36; where they are rendered "*unto the end.*" "My desire is, that Job may be tried never; *or*, may never be tried." This would be inconsistent with the nature of things, as well as a contradiction in the words themselves; for first to say, "My desire is, that Job may be tried," and then to add words that mean *never*, is quite "ridiculous even to suppose; but render the words, unto a time or *period*," or as they will bear, "until he be subdued or overcome," and the meaning is both plain and benevolent; but to wish him tried forever, world without end, would be a most malevolent wish—and to wish him tried *never*, would be nonsense.

Friend.—This translation is very different from that which we commonly read, in which the text appears a very formidable objection indeed; for if they shall never see the light, they cannot be restored.

Minister.—The word *never* is sometimes used in our translation, in such a manner as to oblige us to understand it in a limited sense, as has been proved before; Lev. vi. 13. "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall *never* go out;" and in several other places.

Friend.—I must allow that the words you mention seem very strong and absolute, but the very reason of things obliges us to limit their meaning to a period or age; but where

no such necessity appears we must understand such words in the most absolute and unlimited sense.

Minister.—I think there is an abundant reason from Scripture to limit the time of punishment as any thing whatever; as I trust will appear in the course of our conversation, for which purpose I shall be glad to hear all that you are able to urge against the doctrine of the Restoration.

Friend.—The next objection I shall bring is from Job. xxxvi. 18. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." By which we understand that after death there is no deliverance, no, not even by that great *ransom*, the blood of Christ.

Minister.—This would be one of the strongest objections that you have advanced yet, if the words *a great ransom* had any allusion to the blood of our dear Redeemer, and if it could be fairly demonstrated, that it can have no power over the dead; but I apprehend, when you read and consider the text, context, and similar passages, you will see that no such thing is intended.

Job had frequently wished for death in his trouble and anguish, (as many persons foolishly and wickedly do, that have never felt the tenth part of his afflictions) for which *Elihu* justly reproves him, in these words,—"Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee from death and the grave; from being cut off by the hand of heaven, justly provoked by thy rashness: 'Will he esteem thy riches?' Will he account thy great riches a ransom for thy life? 'No, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.' Wouldst thou give ever so much of the precious ore to ransom thy life, it would be unavailable; or, shouldst thou trust in thy strength of body or mind; shouldst thou plead the readiness of thy wit, the strength and greatness of thy judgment, memory, and other faculties; thy benevolence of disposition; thy usefulness in life; thy numerous connexions; the great honours that await thee; wert thou a monarch, and couldst thou command armies and valient hosts, strong and mighty; all these things would be totally disregarded by God, if he, provoked by thy rashness, should give thee thy wish, and issue the death warrant against thy life; therefore, considering these things, 'Desire not the night (of death, and especially sudden death) when people are cut off in their places;' and there is no remedy, no ransom, no discharge in that war; from which neither power, wisdom, might, riches, honours, wickedness, nor even virtue can deliver. 'Take heed, regard not iniquity;' do not sin in any wise, and especially do not rashly wish for death; which is very presumptuous and heaven daring; 'for this thou hast chosen, rather than affliction.'" See Job. xxxvi. 18–21. This is evidently the plain meaning of the text, and is confirmed by Psalm xlix. 6–9. "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them ca by any means redeem his brother, nor give t God a ransom for him: (For the redemptio of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth fo ever.) That he should still live for ever, an not see corruption." But though the powe of wealth, wisdom and strength, are not suff cient to buy a short reprieve from death; y the power of God is able to ransom therefrom and to redeem from the grave, or hell, as have noticed before; and which is expresse in the last mentioned Psalm, in the followin terms; "But God will redeem my soul fro the power of the grave; for he shall receiv me," verse 15. And by the same parity o reasoning, that the power of the Highest i able also to redeem or ransom the bodies o men from the grave, after they have perishe there; he is able also to redeem souls fro sin and misery, if it be his pleasure; and b the blood of the Messiah's covenant, to sen forth his prisoners out of the pit wherein is n water, not even a drop to cool the tongues o those who are tormented there. I have there fore no doubts, but, the blood of Christ is abl to redeem to the uttermost, and is sufficient t destroy the power of sin, death and hell. N thing in the text on which your objection i founded, can depreciate the merit of tha cleansing, all-powerful blood, by provin that it cannot be effectual to lost souls.

Friend.—But have you forgot that the Scri ture says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth t do, do it with thy might, for there is no worl nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, i the grave, whither thou goest. And if th tree fall toward the south, or toward the nort in the place where the tree falleth, there shall be?" Eccl. ix. 10; xi. 3.

Minister.—No; I have not forgot that suc passages are found in the Bible; and I believ they were written with a design to make u diligent, and wisely to improve our time an talents; and that we should be liberal in giv ing alms, which seems especially to be th meaning of the last, if we may judge by th connexion in which it is found, and withou which I am not able to say what it intend But, in this case, they do not appear to me t be any thing to the purpose, one way or th other; and yet no Scriptures are more fr quently brought than these against the doc trine of the Restoration of all things; but com monly accompanied with some additions such as: "There is no repentance in th grave, nor pardon offered to the dead." An "as death leaves us, so judgment finds us."— Words that I have never found in the Bible but were they repeated ever so often, coul not affect this argument; since the genera Restoration cannot happen till long after th last judgment, and will not be wholly com pleted till the time of the creation of the nev heavens and earth, wherein righteousnes alone shall dwell.

We all know, that the grave is a place o inactivity, where there is no work, device knowledge, nor wisdom; and it is a state t which we shall soon be brought; and, there

fore, we ought to be diligent and industrious now: but those who believe in the immortality of the soul, will not undertake to prove from these words, that it has no knowledge, or wisdom, after it leaves the body; since many of them say, that the soul knows much more in one hour after that event takes place, than in the whole period of its existence before. And as for those who believe that man dies wholly, and sleeps in the grave until the resurrection, they can never bring this text with any consistency against the final Restoration of all men; because, let what will be the state of things in the grave, nothing can prevent our Saviour from raising all at last, and changing them finally for the better, if such be his pleasure. I might, therefore, just as well attempt, from the vii. and xiv. chapters of Job, to prove, that there shall be no resurrection of the dead from their graves, notwithstanding the numerous promises of that grand event; as any person to prove, from these and similar passages, that all men shall not be finally restored; since what is said in those chapters seems ten times more against the former, than any thing that can be urged from these is against the latter. The doctrine of the general resurrection of the just and unjust; and a state of rewards for the former, and punishments for the latter, according to their works; and also the subjection, final reconciliation, and reunion of all things in Christ, are all expressly revealed, and are made the subject of prophecies, threatenings and promises; and are all truths, that cannot be overthrown by any reasonings, as they are plainly declared by God himself.

The Scripture, in abundance of places, highly recommends liberality; and, in the most positive manner, assures the bounteous, that they shall be blest. I need not recite passages to prove, what is so universally known and confessed. Solomon, therefore, having given many excellent precepts to direct us in other matters, comes to exhort us to be bountiful and liberal, in distributing to the necessities of others what God has blessed us withal; saying, "cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the tree fall towards the south, or towards the north; in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Thereby intimating to us, that as certainly as these plain common observations are true, (than which nothing can be more so) shall they who bestow liberally upon the poor and needy, be rewarded; since God has promised and he will perform? See, upon this subject, Deut. xv. 10, 11; Psal. xli. 1-3; cxii; Prov. xi. 24-26; xiv. 31; xix. 17; xxii. 9; St. Matth. vi. 3, 4; x. 42; St. Luke vi. 38; xii. 33; xiv. 12-14; 2 Cor. viii. 9; 1 Tim. vi. 17-19, and many other places.

Solomon then goes on upon the same subject, and intimates to us, by two most striking metaphors, that if we wait till no difficulties appear in our way to hinder us from performing our duty, we shall never reap the blessing; and after giving us to understand that God has many secret ways of working, far above our comprehension, and can therefore bless and reward us in many ways out of our own sight, or the view of others, and yet no less certainly than children are conceived, nourished, and receive life in the womb, we know not how; he comes to give us a warm and pressing exhortation, to be constant in doing good to all, according to our power; and to be so far from concluding that to be lost that we thus bestow, that we ought to consider alms as seed sown into a fruitful soil, and should, with patience, wait for the glorious harvest, when, through the divine blessing, we may expect to reap an hundred fold.

All this is plain and easy; but how any text in this beautiful chain, should ever have been thought to have any allusion to the state of souls departed, or brought as a proof that no alteration can take place after death, I cannot conceive. But, allowing it to have any relation at all to a future state, it cannot then in the least disprove, that very material changes may happen to souls in the spiritual world; since a tree cut down by its owner, lies not long in the same position in which it falls, but is applied to various uses, according to its fitness and his pleasure. But as this is nothing to the purpose, I think I have taken too much pains here already; and I should have said little or nothing upon this part of the objection, were it not continually urged, as though the whole controversy turned and terminated upon this allusion, than which nothing seems farther from the meaning of the text, which in its true sense appears to be this—that as certainly as full clouds must empty themselves upon the tarraqueous globe, and that every thing is *what it is, and where it is*, and no where else;, and as a tree falling to the south, does not fall and lie to the north; and, *vice versa*, so, with the same certainty, shall liberality be blessed and rewarded

Friend.—I have nothing to object to what you have said upon the text; it appears natural. I formerly thought it indeed, that as persons were laid in the grave, so they should rise, and that there could be no change after death; but I am fully convinced, that this belongs not to the subject. But there is another passage, in the book of Ecclesiastes, (chap. ix. 4, 5, 6,) that I should be glad to hear your opinion of:—"For to him that is joined to all the living, there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they must die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also, their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished: neither have they any more a portion for ever, in any thing that is done under the sun."

Minister.—It is evident that the wise man, in this and many other of his observations, only considered things with respect to the present life, without any regard to a future

state. In this view, his declarations are consistent with truth; but in no other. Let the following serve as a specimen. "No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before him. All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath." ver. 1, 2. Nothing could possibly be more false than these observations, applied to a future state, though they are generally true in this life; for if there are no future rewards and punishments, no state of retribution hereafter, there is an end to all religion. But he does not finally leave the matter so; but makes a most excellent conclusion to this book; saying:—

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear (*or* revere) God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil, chap. xii. 13, 14.

Thus it is plain that a living dog is better, (more useful in this world) than a dead lion; which is no longer capable of doing good or evil; that a man when he dies, loses all hopes of enjoyment in this life, and is rendered incapable of exercising the functions of it any longer; has no more a portion in any thing belonging thereto. Thus, in fine, all the observations that can be fairly made, upon this and similar passages, belong entirely to the present state of things; and therefore, do not at all affect the argument, either one way or the other.

Friend.—This is so plain that nothing can be more so; but our Saviour's words (St. John ix. 4,) deserve a particular consideration. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work;"—which is explained commonly of the night of death, when no more works can be wrought.

Minister.—Our Lord was diligent in his labour, he constantly went about doing good; he was never idle; he was in haste, till he had finished the work which his father had given him to do. In this he was—as in every thing else—a glorious pattern and example for us! And, O that we might follow him! Now we may feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame; may take in the stranger, relieve the distressed, visit the sick, the fatherless, widows and prisoners in their affliction; may bury the dead, and constantly perform works of benevolence and mercy, while we remain in this state of our existence; which if we here neglect, we never can perform at all, and of consequence, never can obtain the rewards which are promised to the obedient; but as it is not the state of rewards and punishments that we are now discoursing about, but a state beyond—even the Restoration of all things; neither is the dispute about what *men* can do after this life but what God can do, or wh he has purposed to do with and for them, the ages to come, after the dreadful senten is past; whether they shall be left under t same *while God exists*; or whether they sh ever be restored; or whether they shall annihilated; this, you know, is the state the question; some hold the *first* and othe the *last*; but I am apt to think both the opinions are extremes, and therefore judge safest to mantain the *second*, which I take be the medium here.

Friend.—Indeed I am convinced that circumstance preceding the general jud ment, can affect the argument; because w are informed, that the condemnation of t wicked shall be at that day, when God wi render to them according to their deeds, ar will say to them, *Depart from me*, &c. B the following texts of Scripture form a stron objection to the universal Restoration, whic I would wish you well to consider.

"The expectation of the wicked sha perish; and the hypocrite's hope shall perisl Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose tru shall be a spider's web—He shall lean upo his house, but it shall not stand: he sha hold it fast, but it shall not endure. Th heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the eart shall rise up against him. The eyes of th wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape and their hope shall be as the giving up o the ghost. His confidence shall be roote out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring hi to the king of terrors. For what is the hop of the wicked, though he hath gained, whe God taketh away his soul? Will God hea his cry, when trouble cometh upon him? H that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that withou remedy. When a wicked mandieth, his expe tation shall perish; and the hope of unju men perisheth. Because I have called, and y have refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded. But ye have set a nought all my counsel, and would none o my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity I will mock when your fear cometh. Whe your fear cometh as a desolation, and you destruction cometh as a whirlwind; whe distress and anguish come upon you: the shall they call upon me, but I will not an swer: they shall seek me early, but the shall not find me; for that they hated know ledge, and did not choose the fear of JEHOVAH They would none of my counsel; they de spised all my reproof. Therefore shall the eat of the fruit of their own way, and b filled with their own devices." Prov. x. 28 Job viii. 13–15; xx. 27; xi. 20; xviii. 14 xxvii. 8, 9; Prov. xxix. 1, xi. 7, 1; 24–31.

These, and abundance of other similar pas sages declare the future state of the wicked t be desperate, without hope; they and thei hopes perish together, as the spider's web; the have no hopes or prospect of being redeemed they can look for nothing but judgment an fiery indignation, which shall devour them a stubble fully dry, and as thorns cut up shal

they be burned in the fire. Solomon says, "The expectation of the wicked is wrath." Prov. xi. 23, "As he loved cursing, so shall it come unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so shall it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing, like as with his garment so shall it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones." Psal. cix. 17, 18. Indeed he can have no hopes, when he considers that he hath neglected so great a salvation all his life; that he hath set at nought God's counsels, despised his reproofs; that when his CREATOR called to him to turn, he had no ears to hear his voice; and therefore, when sorrow shall overtake, though he may cry, he shall not be regarded of God; and though he may seek, he shall not find; the Master of the house having risen up, and shut to the door, all knocking for entrance is in vain, even though such were to plead for admittance in the most earnest manner, saying, "Lord Lord, open to us;" he shall answer, "I know you not whence you are;" and though they may reiterate and expostulate, saying, "We have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets," he shall not be moved, but shall say to them, "I tell you I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out." St. Luke xiii. 25–28. See also St. Matth. vii. 21–23; xxv. 11, 12.

Minister.—These are awful warnings, indeed: and were they attended to as they ought to be, would be sufficient, one would think, to deter men from their evil ways. I am glad that you have stated them in this most striking point of light; for though they form no real objection to my views of God's dealing with men, as I understand the Scriptures, they are an insuperable bar to the opinions of those who deny a future state of retribution, which I think impossible for them to answer fairly. I shall, however, notice briefly, some things in this collection of Scriptures, in order that my sentiments may appear in their true light.

1. All the hopes of the wicked, ungodly, and hypocrites, shall perish at their death.

Perhaps they hoped to have lived long, to have enjoyed health, wealth, pleasure, and all worldly good, for many years; to have seen their children for many generations, flourishing for a long time on earth; but death destroys these hopes.

The hypocrites might have hoped that they should have been accepted with God, on the account of their birth, parentage, profession, rank among the people of God, observation of the externals of religion, &c., &c., all of which vain hopes do certainly perish at death.

The profane and wicked infidel, and practical atheist, might have hoped, either to have ceased to exist, or to have found some way of escaping the threatened punishment; but death destroys these hopes also.

2. Whatever may be the final intention of God towards these miserable creatures, it is evident they are shut up in a state of keen tormenting dispair, or dreadful suspence, and may be fully persuaded that they shall never be released, of which it is likely they may not have even the most distant hope, or the least degree of knowledge—but on the contrary, be in fearful expectation of more terrible punishment hereafter.

3. As they have lived and died in sin, their destruction, or misery, is certain—and there is no remedy that can prevent their experiencing the consequences of their crimes, and suffering the just punishment which shall be inflicted on them, according to their different deserts.

4. They who live and die in rebellion against God, will be eternally deprived of the glories and honours of the kingdom of *Christ*, which otherwise they might have possessed; will be excluded from a share in the first resurrection, and will be exposed to suffer the torments of the second death, which all must inevitably suffer, who remain incorrigible till the great day of judgment.

5. As God has called, and they have refused, it is but reasonable to suppose that they in their turn, shall cry in vain, yet, nevertheless, though he may long delay, he may hear their cries, and deliver them at last. See Psal. cvii. 13–16.

David, in his Psalm xxxivth, says, "The face of JEHOVAH is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Our translators not understanding, or not entertaining an idea of the future Restoration, add, "*The righteous* cry, and JEHOVAH heareth and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Whereas the Holy Ghost has put no such words as *the righteous* into the text there; but after saying that the face of JEHOVAH is against them that do evil, to destroy them out of the world, and to make them forgotten, and their names to cease upon the earth, it adds, a word that signifies *crying*, and then says, "And JEHOVAH heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." See ver. 16, 17. This seems indeed like the doctrine of the Bible, which elsewhere says, speaking of the notoriously wicked; "O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth the wood; and as the flame setteth the mountain on fire; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them be confounded, and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame and perish. And they shall know (as the Hebrew word signifies, and as it is rendered in the old translation) that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." Psal. lxxxiii. 13, 16. Here we see in a beautiful and clear manner; that one grand design of God in bringing judgments and even what is called utter destruction, upon men, is that they may know that he is JEHOVAH, the true God; and there

are but few intelligent Christians, but must in some measure, be able to conceive hopes concerning all those to whom the knowledge of God is promised.

Though the threatenings in the prophecy of Ezekiel, both against the Jews and other nations, are uncommonly severe; yet they frequently close with this gracious promise—"And they shall know that I am JEHOVAH," or something similar; as will evidently appear to those who will be at the pains of examining the following passages in that book.

Ezekiel, vi. 7, 10, 13, 14; vii. 4, 9, 27; xi. 10, 12; xii. 15, 16, 20; xii. 9, 14, 21, 23; xiv. 8; xv. 7; xvi. 62; xx. 12, 20. 26, 38, 42, 44; xxii. 16; xxiii. 49; xxiv. 24, 27; xxv. 5, 7, 11, 17; xxvi. 6; xxviii. 22–24, 26; xxix. 6, 9, 16, 21; xxx. 8, 19, 25, 26; xxxii. 15; xxxiii. 29; xxxiv. 27; xxxv. 4, 9, 12, 15; xxxvi. 11, 23, 38; xxxvii. 6, 13; xxxviii. 23; xxxix. 17, 22, 28.

Friend.—But does not punishment harden and inflame offenders instead of softening and humbling them? As we read Isa. viii. 21. "They shall curse their King and their God, and look upward;" and in Rev. xvi. 9–11. "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory. And they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their pains and their sores; and repented not of their deeds."

Minister.—Punishment to a certain degree, inflames and enrages, in a most amazing manner; but continued longer, and heavier, produces a contrary effect—softens, humbles, and subdues. When Ephraim of old, bemoaned himself, he said thus: "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art Jehovah my God." Jer. xxxi. 18. The metaphor here used, expresses in a most lively manner the different effects of the same discipline, in its beginning, progress, and end. When a bullock first has the yoke laid on his neck, he frets, tosses, and rages exceedingly; but by a continuance of the discipline, he is subdued, brought down, humbled and tamed, so as to become the most useful and gentle of animals. The sons of Zion are represented as lying "at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net; full of the fury of Jehovah, the rebuke of God." Isaiah li. 20. A wild bull, in a net must be a furious creature; so are men when first they are brought under the Divine correction. But God knows how to correct men, in such a manner as to bring them to submit to him, in due time; and though some are so sunk in sin as not to be reformed, by any means in this life: yet that is no argument, that God is not able to subdue and bring down the proud and most rebellious in another state, by means that may be used effectually there, though they could not be used here. God says, by the prophet to Israel, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from th filthiness any more till I have caused my fur to rest upon thee. So will I make my fur towards thee to rest, and my jealousy sha depart from thee; and I will be quiet, an will be no more angry." Ezek. xxiv. 13 xvi. 42. Some sins are so daring and pre sumptuous, as to provoke God to threaten they shall not be purged away in this life and, perhaps their malignancy may be s great, that nothing that can be used here i able to subdue them. Thus, when God threat ened his people, of old, with destruction they turned his threatenings into ridicule; in stead of weeping, mourning, baldness, an girding with sackcloth, to which God calle them; there was nothing but "joy and glad ness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eatin flesh and drinking wine. Let us eat an drink, for to-morrow we die. And it was re vealed in mine ears, by Jehovah of Hosts surely this iniquity shall not be purged fron you till ye die, saith Jehovah, God of Israel." Isai. xxii. 12–14.

Thus, punishments are designed for th humbling of the proud; but if they fail o answering that purpose, as administered i the present state, they will be continued an increased in future periods, to such a degree as shall bring all down in due time. Thos pains which produced that rage, and blas phemy, which you mentioned, were all pour ed out on hardened sinners in the present life and were so terrible and severe as to produc those fearful effects, but not sufficiently so a to produce the contrary.

That punishment, to a certain degree, pro duces rage, but to a certain degree beyond produces submission, may be illustrated b the following fact, as well as many others, o the same nature.

In the former war between England and France, there was one Mr. ————, of Virginia, who was wagon-master-general in the army of the Provincials. He was guilty of abusing his power, by frequently striking the soldiers with his wagon whip. Complaint being made, a court martial was held, and he was sentenced to receive five hundred lashes; which sentence was executed upon him. When he first began to feel the lash, he was exceedingly enraged, and cursed those who had thus sentenced him; swearing that if he lived to be released, he would kill them all, if possible; for that he valued not his life in the least, but would revenge this disgrace, by killing them, wherever he found them; and much more to the same purpose. But, before he had received half his punishment, he declared, that he had not the least disposition to lift his hand against them; he saw clearly that they had acted right; that he had been entirely to blame; and that his punishment was just. After his correction was over, he was led quietly away, entirely cured of all his rage; from which he was as much freed by his punishment, as ever an effect was produced by a cause. He was healed of his wounds, and, I think, restored to his post.

Some time after the war was over, he was passing one day over those mountains in Virginia, commonly called *The Blue Ridge*; and there he met alone one of the men who had condemned him, in the court martial, to such a punishment. He put him in mind of it; and told him that it was now in his power to retaliate upon him. The other acknowledged that he was in his power; but added, "M———, you know you did wrong, and deserved the punishment you received; and if you kill me, I declare, that we did right in sentencing you to be whipped; I should do the same, were it to do again; and so would you have done, had you been in my place." Mr. M——— acknowleged the truth of it; and was so far from fulfilling his threatenings, that he suffered him to go in peace, highly commending him for his conduct. Mr. M——— may be still living; he was a general in the American army during the late war, and acquired great honour, for his valour and good conduct.

This I think is an argument *ad hominem*. I have often observed instances of the same nature, in a less degree; and I think it must be admitted, that although a certain degree of punishment will inflame, harden and enrage; yet farther degrees produce quite contrary effects. Nor is punishment the only thing in nature that produces contrary effects, according to the quantity used; almost all things do the same, thus water with a little salt in it, will cause putrefaction, much sooner than perfectly fresh water; but let it be saturated with salt, and it will preserve bodies that are cast therein. A little salt cast on the earth is good manure, and causes fruitfulness; but a greater quantity produces the contrary effect, by causing barrenness. A little wine refreshes, cheers, invigorates; but taken to excess, stupifies and intoxicates. And, to mention no more instances, a little smattering of knowledge puffs up the mind; but a greater degree, humbles and brings it down: From whence,

"*Drink deep, or never taste the spring.*"

Friend.—But let me ask you: when you view the miserable state of fallen men, the inveterate obstinacy of their wills, the total aversion that many have to God, and goodness, their confirmed habits of evil, their amazing love of vice, their opposition to every method taken to reclaim them, and a thousand other dreadful circumstances, which you must have observed; are you not ready to despair of their recovery; not for any want of goodness in God, but through their total incapacity of ever being made better!

Minister.—I must confess, this objection has great weight; and I have often been ready to give up my own salvation, on account of the evils of my own heart, which sometimes rise, and prevail in such a manner, as almost drives me to despair; and I can find no relief but by flying to Jesus, as my only refuge, and trusting in his promises; and the case is the same with respect to the Restoration of all men. My weak reason tells me, that it cannot be; that it is absolutely impossible that such hardened rebels can be so changed in eternity, as to become willing and obedient subjects; but when faith prevails, it informs me, that the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God; that nothing is too hard for Jehovah; and that he hath said: "Behold I am Jehovah, the God of all flesh; is there any thing too hard for me?" Jer. xxxii. 27. And the example of Abraham has often proved a great support to me in this case; "who, against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be; and being not weak in faith, he considered not" the impediments, which, to the eye of reason, rendered the accomplishment of the promises improbable, if not impossible. "He staggered not at the promises of God, through unbelief: but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Rom. iv. 18–21.

This is the only way I answer this objection to my satisfaction—God hath sworn, that to him every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, Isaiah xlv. 24. That in the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, Phil. ii. 10, 11. That it is the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to gather together, or rehead, in one, all things in Christ: both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. Ephes. i. 9, 10. And having made peace through the blood of his cross, he is determined to reconcile all things unto himself; whether things in heaven, or things on earth. Col. i. 20. That he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Ephes. i. 11. That he will have all men to be saved, or restored, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. ii. 6. That the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. St. John iii. 35. And that Christ hath said, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." St. John vi. 37. When I consider these, and many such like promises, which I find in the Scriptures; and that he that hath promised, is able to perform; hath wisdom, power and goodness, sufficient to accomplish all his words, how deficient or impossible soever the matter may seem, to our carnal, vain and weak reasoning, I cast the whole of my concern upon him, judging that he is faithful, who hath promised, and that, in his own time he will fulfil all his purposes, and all his promises. But I confess to you, that it requires a faith, if possible, more strong than that of Abraham, to believe the doctrine of the Restoration steadfastly, in the midst of so much evil as prevails in the world, and which seems to

render it impossible: but my only hope is in God.

But, to encourage us the more, there are not only promises of what God will do, but examples of what he hath done, recorded in Scripture, as the cases of Manasseh, Nebuchadnezzar, Mary Magdalen, Saul, and many of the murderers of our Lord, priests, and even Pharisees, are left on record, as patterns of God's long suffering, power, mercy and love. And I would advise those Christians that doubt of the Universal Reconciliation of all things, to remember St. Paul's words to the Colossians on this subject, chap. i. 21, "And you that were some time alienated, and enemies in your mind, by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled;" as a proof and example of his power to reconcile all things. Let all remember their own stubbornness; and then instead of revling and deriding a truth which God has revealed, they will adore him, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" Rom. xi. 36, Dan. iv. 35.

Friend.—But allowing that God has power to change the hearts of the vilest of men, is not the exercise of that power evidently limited? For I find it written in Rev. xxii. 11, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." By these words it seems to be intimated, that the characters of both the wicked and the righteous, shall at some period be so confirmed and fixed, as to admit of no change or alteration.

Minister.—This appears to be a considerable difficulty, but can by no means overthrow the system of the Restoration, which seems established upon many gracious promises. The word seems to refer to a particular period, even when the Lord shall come, and shew that his coming will not (as some suppose) change the characters of men; but that all shall continue for a certain time, in the same character as before. But though he that is unjust, shall be unjust still; and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still—during the age of judgment; and shall have the dreadful curse pronounced upon him; for, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema Maranatha;" that is, accursed, the Lord cometh, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Yet I trust I have proved, that the vilest shall be finally changed; and consequently, that these words must be understood with some limitation. And thus though this text is plainly contrary to the opinion of those who suppose that all the human race shall be admitted into the kingdom of heaven at the day of judgment, yet it may well be reconciled to the system laid down in these Dialogues; especially if it can be proved that similar expressions are used, where a limitation is supposed, or necessarily implied.

Friend.—Yes; if you can find similar expressions used for limited times, it will be satisfactory.

Minister.—St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xiv. 38, "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." But we can hardly suppose that he meant without limitation. So we read of the Jews, that "God hath given them the spirit of slumber; eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day." And David saith;—"Let their table be made a snare and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them. Let their eyes be darkened that they should not see, and bow down their back alway." Rom. 8–10. These expressions of their remaining in a blinded, hardened, and reprobate state, are stronger than those—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still," &c., for, instead of *still*, the word *alway* is used; and yet we are informed, that this "blindness in part has (only) happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved." And that "God hath concluded them all (or shut them up together) in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," even all whom he had shut up, or concluded in unbelief. And, as I observed before, David says; "Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O Jehovah. Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: that they may know that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth." Psalm lxxxiii. 16–18. Many other similar passages might be mentioned; but these may suffice, to shew, that often where the words *let it* or *let them be*, in such and such a state, they only intend a certain period, until another dispensation takes place. As for righteousness, holiness, and happiness, they have quite a different foundation from sin and impurity, as I have shewn before: and therefore, no arguments used in favor of the total destruction of evil, can, in the least, prove, that goodness, which is the divine essence, shall cease: but the contrary: and those who are firmly joined to the Lord, and have continued with him through the state of temptation, shall never cease to be righteous, nor be separated from their Head, from whom they shall derive eternal life: for Christ hath said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." St. John xiv. 19.

Christ, at his coming, will bring every hidden thing to light, and shall take off all disguises: so that he that is unjust, shall appear unjust: and he that is filthy, shall be discovered: hypocrisy shall be no more. "The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful." Isaiah xxxii. 5. "Then shall ye return, and discern, between the righteous and the wicked: and between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." Mal. iii. 18. The judgment of God is according to truth, and, is designed to make an entire discovery of all persons, and all secret things, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty be-

fore God." Rom. iii. 19. But though judgment has its great use in discovering, laying open, convincing and condemning: and punishment in destroying, subduing, and humbling: yet the powerful, saving grace of God, and the operation of the Divine Spirit, must have the glory of restoring, or creating men anew: and the blood of Jesus must cleanse their souls from the guilt and pollution of sin. Evil must be destroyed out of them: this is done by afflictions: and goodness must be restored: this is done by God's renewing power and grace.

But the objection may be answered another way, without any of this reasoning by considering the subject comparatively. Thus: as God only is holy; as none are good but he, in an absolute sense; as he putteth no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not clean in his sight, and his angels he chargeth with folly; (See Job xv. 15; iv. 18.) and as all intelligences, compared with him, are unjust and unclean; so, those who have lived and died in rebellion against God, and in the pollution of sin, may remain unjust and filthy, compared with the saints, those vessels of honour and glory, who have purged themselves. "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood, and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore, purge himself from these (sins) he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21. Here we may observe, that in our Lord's great house there shall be divers vessels of various kinds, yet all useful, but some more highly so than others: that honour and dishonour are comparative terms: and that the way to become vessels of the highest honour at last, is to purge ourselves from iniquity while on earth, by obeying the truth. For it must appear evident, from the nature of things, that there will always be an immense difference between those who shall be kings and priests to God, and those who shall be subdued in the ages to come, so as to be subjects, but who shall not attain to that honour and glory which they shall have who suffer with Christ here, and shall be glorified with him hereafter.

Friend.—Since I have conversed with you I must acknowledge that many things have appeared in a different light from what they did before; and if I do not wholly embrace the doctrine of the Restoration, I must allow that there is much more to be said for it than I could have imagined. But I have still some difficulties that I wish to propose. There is a terrible threatening which is indeed the last in the Bible, that I should be glad to hear your thoughts upon, which is thus expressed, (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) "For I testify unto every man, that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." But I can almost foresee how you will answer this; that though the plagues that are written in this book shall be added, yet mercy shall finally rejoice against judgment; though a man's part may be taken out of the book of life, and he, in consequence, suffer the torments of the second death; yet, as a time will come, when there shall be no more death of any kind, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain; his Restoration may be certainly inferred; and though his part in the heavenly city may be forfeited, so that he may never become one of those who shall reign therein, nor yet have a constant dwelling there; he may, nevertheless, enter as a worshipper, and a subject of the great king; and may drink of the water of life; feed on the fruits of the life, and be healed by its leaves; and be one of the happy inhabitants of the earth, which God will create.

Minister.—Yes, my friend: but though this Scripture may be easily reconciled to the plan laid down in these dialogues; it contains such threatenings as are very terrible indeed; and should make us exceedingly careful not to contradict what God hath here revealed, by adding vain interpretations of our own, contrary to the sense of the text: nor in any wise to explain away or weaken, the force of either the threatenings or promises, set forth in this wondrous book. The amazing torments which they shall feel that have these plagues added to them, and the dreadful loss which they shall sustain that have their part taken out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, cannot be even conceived; and it being possible to forfeit this glorious portion entirely, and for ever, made St. Paul warn the Hebrews in such a solemn manner as he doth throughout the whole epistle.—Oh, what affecting advice is the following!—"Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God: lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright. For ye know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessings, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully, with tears." Heb. xii. 15–17.

"Poor Esau repented too late,
That once he his birthright despis'd;
And sold for a morsel of meat,
What could not too highly be priz'd.

"How great was his anguish, when told,
The blessing he sought to obtain
Was gone, when the birthright he sold;
And none could recall it again!"

Thus, though Esau, as well as Jacob, was blessed concerning things to come: (See Heb. xi. 20) yet their birthright, and the particular blessings connected therewith, he lost forever: and so it is possible that we may lose our parts in the holy city, or no such threat-

enings would ever have been made. For it is a maxim with me—that God never warns where there is no danger to fear: and never encourages us to hope, where there is no possibility of obtaining.

As the glorious and universal deliverance of all men from the bondage of sin, and their obtaining an inheritance in the new earth, was clearly pointed out by the great year of Jubilee, under the law: in which every servant went out free, and every man returned to his possession, and to his family: (see Lev. xxv. 10:) so, the possibility of being cut off from the holy city, for ever, was pointed out by that notable exception, ver. 29, 30. "And if a man sell a dwelling-house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold: within a full year, he may redeem it. And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be established for ever to him that bought it, throughout his generations: it shall not go out in the Jubilee."

Something similar to this may be found in Rev. iii. 11.—"Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown:" and the 5th verse is also worthy of consideration—"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life: but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."—O, what promises are made to overcomers! That they shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God: shall have a crown of life: and shall not be hurt of the second death: shall eat of the hidden manna: shall have a white stone, and a new name, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it: shall have power over the nations, &c., even as Christ received of the Father: shall walk with him in white: shall be esteemed worthy to be companions and friends of God: shall be clothed in white: shall have their names enrolled among the followers of the Lamb, as called, chosen, and faithful: shall be confessed by the Son of God, before his Father and the holy angels: shall be made pillars in the temple of God, and shall go no more out: shall have the name of God written upon their foreheads, and the name of the holy city, New-Jerusalem, and Christ's new, heavenly name: shall sit with him upon his throne, even as he overcame, and is set down with the Father, upon his throne: shall inherit all things: shall be called the sons of God. See Rev. ii. 7, 10, 11, 17, 26, 27; iii. 4, 5, 12, 21; xvii. 14; xxi. 7.

The apostle assures us, that "If (we are) children, then (we are) heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." And then adds—"For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time, are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii. 17, 18. "When Christ, who is our life shall appear; then shall ye (his saints) also appear with him in glory." Col. iii. 4. "We know, tha when he shall appear, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2 But let none of those who believe themselve the heirs of this kingdom, &c., dare to indulg themselves in sin, under a notion that God ca never cast them off: as some do.

A preacher whom I once knew, encourage this wickedly presumptuous disposition s far, as, openly to say: "God cannot dam me: He can as soon cease to be God, as h can cast me off: even though I should si ever so much. If I should kill a man, h could not damn me: nay, if I should kill a the men in the world, he cannot damn me. —This man was rigid in trifles, religiousl scrupulous in frivolous things, such as dres &c., yet he made traffic of the human kind, en gaged in war, and performed acts of cruelt and outrage with as little tenderness as ma be imagined! He long bloated himself wit a notion of God's peculiar favour—but nea the close of his life, the displeasure of th Almighty coming visibly upon him, th *rhapsodist* changed his tone, and exclaimed that God had forsaken him!

I would advise all men, of that bold, pre suming, self-confident spirit, to read and con sider well those words, in Jer. xxii. 24: "A I live saith JEHOVAH, though *Coniah*, the so of *Jehoiakim*, king of Judah, were the signe upon my right hand; yet I would pluck the thence."

Consider, first, who speaks: Jehovah. H not only speaks, but he confirms his threaten ing with an oath; and because he coul swear by no greater, he sware by himself, b his own life; "As I live, saith JEHOVAH though *Coniah*, the son of *Jehoiakim*, king o Judah," though he is of the family of *David* with whom I have made an everlasting cove nant, ordered in all things, and sure; an though he is anointed king over my people; will not spare him; yea, though he "wer the signet upon my right hand; yet would pluck thee thence." Signets, upon the hand of ancient Persian monarchs, were those seal with which their decrees were sealed an confirmed; so that no man could revers them. Now, God declares, that if this ma was ever so dear, and as necessary to him, a the signet on the right hand of a king is to it owner; that though he was not able to gover his kingdom without his assistance; thoug he had been the dearest and most useful thing he would entirely cast him off, for his trans gression. And how much more so, if it b considered, that no man is necessary to God that man cannot be profitable to him; tha neither our wickedness can hurt him, nor ou righteousness benefit him; (See Job xxii, 2 3; xxxv. 6, 7, 8.; Psal. xvi. 2, 3.) And h threatens to punish the only family that h had known on the earth, for all their iniqui ties. Amos iii. 2. What have not those t fear, who have been placed in high stations entrusted with precious treasures, great abili ties, opportunities, &c., and have abuse them! Let such read and seriously conside

Luke xii. 42–48; Matth. xxiv. 45–15; 2 Pet. ii. 20–22.

Friend.—These considerations are, on one hand glorious and sublime, beyond conception; and, on the other, terrible beyond description. But some say, that if they are only admitted into the kingdom of God, and are not cast into the lake of fire, it is the highest of their ambition; that they never aspire to be kings and priests; nor to obtain a crown, throne, sceptre, &c. And others say, that if they are ever, to all eternity, to be delivered from their misery, that it is a matter of little consequence to them whether they are followers of Christ here, or not.

Minister.—These kind of reflections are frequently thrown out by the enemies of the Restoration, to cast an odium upon the doctrine. But if they were to hear a man say; "If I am just suffered to enter into this kingdom, and am not condemned as a rebel, it is all I wish; I desire neither the riches, honours, pleasures, conveniences, nor even the necessaries that many of the inhabitants enjoy; all I ask is to be exempted from the pain and shame of public punishment;" and another was to add—"I can see little or no difference between being made heir apparent to the crown, possessing all the privileges, honours, dignities, &c., of a prince of the blood; and being hanged, drawn, and quartered, for high treason; since even the punishment, painful and shameful as it is, must come to an end;" I ask, would they not esteem both these men in a state of insanity, or worse; entirely devoid of all sense and reason? Yet, this unreasonable language, is not worthy to be named in the same day with that which you mentioned. The difference is so great I cannot find language to express it. I therefore consider all such persons as madmen, with whom it is not worth while to reason; who understand not what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Friend.—So they appear to me. But the system you have laid down appears equally calculated to check presumption and despair, and to cure all such spiritual madness; provided that they will attend to it.—But what will you say to the doctrine of *annihilation? That* may not be liable to the same objections as *endless damnation;* and so the wicked may be punished with *everlasting destruction*, and destroyed, soul and body, in hell; and yet, at last, all beings that are in existence may be made happy. The Scripture seems, in many places, to favour this idea; and the works of nature seem to confirm it. For instance; many fruits and animals perish, before they arrive at perfection; and why may it not be so with the souls and bodies of men? They are no where said to be raised to corruption, or immortality; but to be destroyed, to be cast into the lake of fire, to be burnt up, root and branch; to be consumed, devoured, burnt up as chaff, thorns, &c. I need not mention particular texts; because the general part of the threatenings in the Scriptures run in that style. And I have sometimes of late reasoned with myself, that the second death must end either in the Restoration or annihilation of those who were cast therein; for there seemed something in endless misery, that surpassed my belief, at times. But I could not satisfy myself whether the wicked would be finally restored to some degree of happiness, or totally destroyed; and was apt to think the latter, as it seemed a strange figure of speech to call *destruction*, Restoration.—Pray, have you ever thought upon this matter?

Minister.—There are but three possible things that can befal those that are cast into the second death; either *endless misery*, *total annihilation* or *Restoration;* a fourth cannot be thought upon; and but one of these can be true. Now, where there are only three possibilities, of which only one can be true, and one must be true; there are these two ways of discovering the truth; first, if two of the propositions are proved to be absurd, the third must stand: 2dly, if one be proved true, the others must fall to the ground of consequence. I have taken the second method; and having shewed that the doctrine of the Restoration is not absurd, and therefore that it is true; consequently, the others are false.—But, besides this way of arguing there are three circumstances which prove to my satisfaction, that *annihilation* is not a truth.

1. That at the very time that the wicked are destroyed, they are said to be tormented with fire and brimstone; and that they have no rest, day, nor night, and the continuance of this is for no short time, (as would probably be the case if the intention of God was only to destroy them out of being) but for the age of ages. Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

2. They are put to shame and perish, that they may know the Lord as I have noticed before. See Psal. xxxiv. 16, 17; lxxxiii. 16–18—and the observations I have made upon these passages in the dialogues.

3. But that on which I dare venture the whole cause, is, that God hath absolutely promised to restore and bring again those whom he hath utterly destroyed.

Friend.—Can you prove that? For if you can, it will settle the whole controversy.

Minister.—I trust I can, in many instances. But I will fix upon one that is full to the purpose, and is unexceptionable; and that is the case of *Sodom*, and her daughters, *Gomorrah*, *Admah*, and *Zeboim;* who, "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Jude 7.

As they are set forth for an example in their punishment, so also in their restoration; for we may certainly argue, that if any of the human race shall be annihilated, the inhabitants of *Sodom*, *Gomorrah*, &c., will be; as they were condemned with an overthrow, and made an example to those who should after live ungodly. 2. Pet. ii. 6. But these wicked nations shall have their captivity re-

turned; shall return to their former estate; and shall be received by *Jerusalem*, as daughters in the everlasting covenant: *Jerusalem* and her daughters, more wicked themselves, than *Sodom* and her daughters, shall be restored at the same time; shall remember their ways and be ashamed; shall never open mouth any more to glory over the meanest of mankind; when the great JEHOVAH shall be pacified towards *Jerusalem*, for all that she has done, and towards *Sodom* and *Samaria*, for all that they have done also, inasmuch as they shall return from their long captivity, and be given to *Jerusalem* for daughters. See Ezek. xvi. 53, 55, 61, 63.

Now, by Sodom and her daughters being returned from their long and dreadful captivity, we must understand one of the three things: either, first, the return of their descendants; or, secondly, the restoration of the land whereon the cities stood; or, lastly, the restoration of those very persons who were destroyed.

It cannot be the first; for there are none of their descendants remaining on earth; all were destroyed by fire and brimstone; none of the inhabitants escaped, Lot and his daughters excepted; who were only sojourners, and were the descendants of Terah and relations to Abraham.

As it cannot be the first let us try the second. A very ingenious gentleman supposes, that in the time of the Millennium, the Dead Sea shall be turned into land, and shall again become a beautiful well watered plain, and be given to the posterity of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*: For he argues, and seemingly very justly, that as God promised *Abraham* all the land which he could see from the place where he then stood; (see Gen. xiii. 14–17) and as the plain of *Sodom* was in sight, it was included in the grant: and though the Dead Sea now occupies the place where those cities stood; yet God's promise cannot fail; and therefore, in the Millennium, the Dead Sea shall be swallowed up, and the place shall become a fruitful plain. But whoever will read Ezek. xlvii. 8–11, may plainly see, that the waters that shall issue out from under the threshold of the holy house, shall be brought into the Dead Sea; and shall so heal those deadly waters, that they shall become fruitful, and bring forth fish in great abundance; exceeding many; like the great sea, which is now called the *Mediterranean*; which fish shall be more useful for food, to the innumerable inhabitants that shall then be in that happy country, than all the vegetables that would grow there, even though the whole place was turned into a fruitful garden.

Friend.—But are you certain, that by the *sea*, is meant the *Dead Sea*, or *Lake of Sodom*?

Minister.—Yes. 1. Because all the other waters in those parts, produce great plenty of excellent fish; and therefore, need not healing. 2. Because fishers shall stand upon the banks of the sea, from Engedi even unto Eneglaim, places that are well known to be contiguous, to the Dead Sea; one of which is nearly at the northeast corner, the other at the west end of the same. 3. The marshes, and the miry places thereof, shall not be healed; but shall be given to salt, as specimens of what the whole is at this time; which barren and deadly spots shall remain, as standing evidences of the truth of Scripture, and the exact fulfilment of prophecy.

Thus, as *Sodom* cannot be restored in her posterity, there being none remaining on earth; neither shall the Dead Sea be turned into land, in the Millennium; it follows, as the only remaining sense of the return of Sodom's captivity, that those very inhabitants, who were destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven, shall be restored to a state of felicity. And thus, both the doctrines of *annihilation* and *endless damnation*, fall to the ground at once.

Friend.—But as it is the second death, after the day of judgment, that is to destroy the bodies and souls of the wicked in hell; perhaps, the inhabitants of *Sodom*, *Samaria*, and *Jerusalem*, may be restored before that period, and may not be cast into the lake of fire.

Minister.—It is evident by our Saviour's words, (for we must not contradict any part of the Scriptures) that this will not be the case; for he saith, that it shall be more tolerable for the land (*that is*, the inhabitants) of *Sodom*, in the day of judgment, than for the cities where his gospel was preached, and his miracles wrought, and yet the inhabitants remained impenitent. See St. Matth. xi. 24; x. 15; St. Mark vi. 11; St. Luke x. 12. From all which passages it is evident, that the inhabitants of *Sodom* will be condemned in the day of judgment, and punished in the lake of fire; and though their misery will not be so great as that of the inhabitants of the cities where our Saviour preached, and performed his mighty works; yet they will be miserable in that day; and, consequently, the return of their captivity is not to be expected, till after the creation of the new earth. Therefore, it is plain, that the lake of fire is not designed to annihilate those who are cast therein: since all that are not found written in the book of life, at the day of judgment, will be cast into the lake of fire. They whose names are in the book of life, will be happy. The inhabitants of *Sodom* will be miserable, in some degree; therefore, will not be found written in the book of life; consequently, will be cast into the lake of fire. They will be restored; their captivity shall be returned; therefore the lake of fire shall not anihilate them. They are set forth for an example in their punishment; and consequently, in their Restoration. I need not pursue this argument farther. It appears evident to me; and till it be fairly answered, I shall add nothing more.

Friend.—I lately read a sermon written by one Mr. B———, in which the writer brings many strong reasons for the eternity of hell

torments, most of which have already been mentioned and answered in these Dialogues; but he makes use of one which has not yet been brought under our consideration, which is, that the damned are under the necessity of constantly committing fresh sin, and therefore as they will always continue to sin against God, so of necessity their punishment can never cease. Have you ever thought of this?

Minister.—Yes, I have frequently heard it mentioned, but as it appears totally void of all foundation in the Scripture, it hardly deserves any notice. The objections that I feel myself concerned to treat with seriousness and respect, and candidly to answer, are those which appear to be drawn from the book of divine Revelation; but if I must attend to all those which the ingenuity of men might raise against the doctrine of the Restoration, I should not only have a very hard task, but should never know when I had done, and besides the discourse would dwindle into trifling and conjectures, very unsuitable to the nature and importance of such an awfully serious subject. I must observe, that this objection is nothing but a rash ungrounded assertion, or bold conjecture, without the least foundation either in Scripture, or reason, and if I was to assert just the contrary, I cannot see why my assertion would not be a sufficient answer. Nevertheless, lest it should be thought that any objection can be raised, that cannot be fairly answered, and that I, knowing the strength of this, would willingly evade it, I will say a few words upon it. The Scriptures universally hold forth the idea, that men will be judged, condemned, and punished according to the deeds done in the body. God will render to every man according to his deeds." Rom. ii. 6. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. v. 10. "And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." St. Luke xii. 47, 48. These, and all the passages that speak of future punishment, constantly hold it forth as a just retribution for the evil deeds done in this life; but never intimate any thing of what this objection holds forth, of punishment being continued *ad infinitum* for crimes committed hereafter. Besides, it is plain that punishments or corrections are intended to stop men from sinning, and under the divine agency to take away their sins. "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged: and this is all the fruit to take away his sin." Isai. xxvii. 9. This is universally allowed to be the design of troubles and sorrows in the present life, and why not in the next state also? The Scripture says nothing to forbid this idea, but much to encourage it; particularly that awful passage where the prophet says, and it was revealed in mine ears by Jehovah of Hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts." Isai. xxii. 14. If then iniquity shall not be purged away after death, it is certain that men shall not always continue to sin in a future state, for they must cease to commit iniquity, before it can be purged away. And though their punishments may at first cause them to rage, (as we see is frequently the case in this world) yet they continue until the most stubborn shall be entirely subdued and humbled.

Friend.—There is another argument of this same kind, viz. that is not founded upon any particular text of Scripture, which is directly contrary to the one you have been answering, which I have formerly thought unanswerable in favour of the doctrine of endless punishment, which is the *infinity* of sin, being against an infinite object, containing infinite hatefulness, and justly therefore deserving infinite punishment. Sin is a crime of infinite magnitude, because God is a Being of infinite majesty and perfection. Every crime justly demerits punishment proportioned to its malignity! and consequently every offence against God demerits infinite punishment. No mere creature can ever suffer an infinity of punishment in any limited duration. It follows therefore, that a sinner deserves to be eternally punished. Farther, every man is under infinite obligations to devote himself to the service of God, his infinitely glorious Creator, Preserver and Benefactor. To violate an infinite obligation is to commit a crime of infinite malignity. A crime of infinite malignity, deserves infinite punishment. Can it ever be proved then that everlasting, or endless punishment is not the proper desert of a life of sin? I have often said, that this argument, trite and common as it is, never was, nor ever would be fairly answered: nevertheless, I am willing to hear what you have to say upon it.

Minister.—As this argument, is often urged, as of the greatest weight, and as you have stated it in its greatest possible force, I shall endeavour to answer it fairly and particularly.

If sin is infinite, then we must ascribe to it one of the perfections of the Deity, which strikes me as something absurd, if not something worse; sin, a privation, an act of a worm, infinite? Actions must, in my opinion take their denomination from the actors, and not from the objects. Infinite actions, or actions of infinite magnitude require infinite power to perform them. If sin is of infinite magnitude, goodness is more so, as deriving a power from God to the performance of it. But if you grant that David spoke in the name of the Mediator in Psalm xvi. you may be at once furnished with a proof, that even goodness, in the highest state in which it ever was exhibited in the world, was not considered as of infinite magnitude by the great per-

former. "Thou hast said unto Jehovah, Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee. But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight," verse 2, 3. If acts of goodness were of infinite magnitude they must extend to God, but the speaker, in these words, be he who he may, David or Christ, was careful to let us know that he did not conceive his acts of goodness infinite. And if acts of goodness are not infinite, it would be absurd to call evil actions infinite, which proceed wholly from the creature.

I grant indeed that there is a passage of Scripture which mentions the word infinite as belonging to sin and iniquity, but then it is mentioned in such a connexion as shows it to be used as Josephus frequently mentions it, for a very great multitude. And thus it is used by many good authors, who certainly do not mean to use it in the first and proper sense of the word. The sacred writer, in the passage alluded to, takes particular care to guard us against any such idea, as though sin was of infinite magnitude, or virtuous and righteous actions, which approach far nearer to infinity, as having their source from the fountain of infinite goodness. For Eliphaz says, "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect? Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into judgment? Is not thy wickedness great? And thine iniquities infinite?" Job xxii. 2–5. And language very similar to the above is used by Elihu: "If thou sinnest what dost thou against him? Or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man." Job xxxv. 6–8.

These expressions, if they teach any thing, I should think, expressly declare, that no actions of men can by any means be of infinite magnitude, in the sense in which we commonly understand that word; though their numbers and magnitudes may be so great as to be styled infinite, as the word is sometimes used.

You assert in consequence of your ideas of infinite sin, that every offence against God demerits infinite punishment. If the case be so, does it not tend entirely to take away the distinction which God hath made between sins of infirmity and sins of malice, sins of ignorance and sins of wilfulness, lesser and greater sins? All sins are offences against God, and if every offence against God is of infinite magnitude, how can any be greater? and thus the distinctions are entirely destroyed, and, all sins will be esteemed equal, contrary to the whole tenor of the Scriptures.

If every offence against God demerits infinite punishment, then it will follow, that God cannot render to any according to their ways, nor punish them as their iniquities deserve, unless they are doomed to endless misery; what then will become of all those threatenings where God threatens to punish people for all their iniquities, and yet to shew favour to them afterwards? This is impossible upon your plan, for none can ever receive all the punishment due to their sins, during numberless ages. Yet if the word of God is true he can deal with transgressors as they have done, and yet be gracious to them afterwards. "For thus saith Adonai JEHOVAH, I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith Adonai JEHOVAH." Ezek. xvi. 59, 60, 63.

Here is an instance to the purpose of those whose sins were of the deepest die, and to whom God threatens to deal as they had done, and to punish them for all their numerous and aggravated transgressions, and yet to remember mercy for them afterwards, and to be pacified towards them for all that they had done. All which things would be absolutely impossible, according to your ideas. In many other parts of Scripture God promises to render to transgressors according to their works and ways, and yet to be afterwards gracious unto them. And in one place, at least, where God is declaring the great mercies which he will manifest unto the children of Israel in returning them to their own land, and causing them to dwell safely therein, he says, "And first, I will recompense their iniquity, and their sin *double;* because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abiminable things." Jer. xvi. 18. What do you think of this? If every offence is of infinite magnitude, and deserves infinite punishment, which can never be fully executed, then how can God punish a people for all their iniquities, and do to the greatest sinners as they have done, yea, and recompense their iniquity, and their sin *double* first, and then be gracious unto them, and love them, and be pacified towards them afterwards? And the prophet Isaiah says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the LORD's hand DOUBLE FOR ALL HER SINS." Isai. xl. 1, 2. Here a fact is said to be accomplished, which upon your scheme can never be done to all eternity; for if every offence against God is of infinite magnitude, and deserves infinite punishment, none can ever have received *single* for one of their sins, far less double for all.

And therefore nothing can possibly be more evidently contrary to Scripture than your

trite and common argument, that as every sin is of infinite magnitude, so it justly demerits infinite punishment, which as no mere creature can bear, must necessarily subject all who are recompensed according to their own doings to endless misery.

Besides, if I was to grant you, contrary to Scripture, reason and common sense, that every offence is of infinite magnitude, and naturally deserves infinite punishment, how would you prove from that, the certainty of endless misery? Do you make nothing of the reconciliation which our Lord Jesus Christ has made for all sinners and for all sins?

Let me ask you seriously, did not Christ make a full and complete offering and propitiation for the sins of the whole world? Is it not certain that his merits were far greater than the demerits of all mankind? Is he not the lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world? If Christ died for all men, without exception, as you grant, and removed all their iniquities, and bore them away, and reconciled all to God by his death while they were enemies; much more as he has paid so great a price for their ransom, he will recover them out of their lost estate, and save them by his life. "Where sin abounded, grace did (or shall) much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v. 20, 21.

I conclude, that let sin be ever so great, the grace of God is greater; and if you will have it that sin is of infinite magnitude, I hope you will not deny the propitiation of Jesus Christ, which he made for all sins, the same character. Therefore if you magnify sin, and insist upon the greatness of its demerit, I will endeavour to magnify the all-powerful Redeemer, above it and speak of his power to redeem all the human race for whom he shed his blood. And then you will gain nothing in favour of the doctrine of endless damnation, by all your arguments founded upon the infinity of sin.. Christ being far more infinite to save, than sin can be to destroy; and as he has undertaken to redeem and bring back those who were lost, there is no danger of his failing to perform it.

Friend.—I must confess that what you have said on this head entirely convinces me, that we cannot found the eternity of punishment, upon infinity of sin; and you have given me more satisfaction upon many points in these conversations than I ever expected to receive. I am indeed at length almost persuaded to receive your sentiments, though I once thought that it was impossible to answer all my objections, yet you have gone far towards it. Nay I cannot at present recollect any thing material, but what you have answered. I would not be too hasty in adopting this system, but after your example will consider it well. But there is certainly something more grand, beautiful, and harmonious in this view, than can be found in any other scheme; for both the other systems end in darkness and black night, one in endless damnation, and the other in gloomy annihilation. But on your plan light rises out of obscurity, and a glorious day succeeds the darkest scenes. This view of things sets the Book of divine Revelation in the most pleasing light, and appears, for aught any thing that I can see, consistent with the Divine perfections. But why, since you believe the Universal Restoration, do you not mention it more freely and fully, in your public discourses?

Minister.—On the other hand, some ask me, Why do you ever mention it at all in your sermons; since it is not essential to salvation to believe it? To them I give these answers:

1. St. Paul declared to Timothy, that this Universal Gospel of God's being the Saviour, or Restorer of all men, but especially of those that believe, was a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation; and that they laboured and suffered reproach, because they trusted in God, as the universal Saviour. But he was so far from being ashamed of this belief, that he said to Timothy, "These things command and teach." 1 Tim. iv. 9–11. And so am I determined to do, at proper opportunities: notwithstanding the reproach and contempt awaiting me for so doing.

2. Though it is frequently said to be a matter of little or no consequence, if true; yet if it be any part of the record God hath given of his Son, (as I think I have proved) we are in danger of making him a liar, if we believe it not. See 1 John ver. 9–11.

3. Though you may be Christians, and not believe it; yet I cannot; though once I could also. But now the evidences of its truth appear so plain to my mind, that it would be criminal in me not to believe it; since I do believe it, would it not be highly dishonest in me to deny it? I have never done so yet, when asked; and God forbid, that I should be ashamed to publish, what he has commanded to be made known.

4. I have commonly acted merely on the defensive, and I never should, that I know of, have preached it in public, or but rarely, far less have written upon the subject, had it not been represented as a dangerous and destructive heresy; and people been cautioned against hearing me, on that account.

5. I have been frequently desired to preach upon the subject, expressly; and could not well refuse, without betraying a cowardly disposition.

6. I ask, Who is the best man; he who preaches the truth contrary to his judgment, for interest, or to gain applause; or he that fairly speaks as he thinks, without disguise; although he knows that it will displease his best friends on earth; even upon the supposition that he errs in many points? If there be an heretic, in the world, it is the man who for the love of money or applause, or through the fear of man, preaches that to others which he himself doth not believe. "He that is such, is subverted, and sinneth; being condemned of himself." Tit. iii. 11.

7. If we are to hold forth nothing to man-

kind, but what all are agreed in, we must discourse upon very few subjects; for I do not recollect so much as one, but what people either disagree about the thing itself, or the manner of explaining and holding it; no! not even the being and perfections of God; nor any point of doctrinal, experimental, or even practical religion.

8. We are to endeavour to teach mankind what they know not, as well as to confirm them in what they are already taught; should keep back nothing that may be profitable to them; should give meat to strong men, as well as milk to babes, and should not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. We ought to justify the ways of God to men, to shew the necessity and harmony of Divine Revelation, and take pains to convert infidels; all which things are more promoted by this view than any other.

As to your question, why I do not dwell more upon it? I answer:

1. There are a thousand other subjects in the Bible, besides this; and all deserve consideration, according to their weight and importance.

2. I have an utter aversion to going always in the same round of matter or manner; and, therefore I frequently vary in both.

3. There are many other subjects of more present importance than the belief of this; such as repentance, faith, hope, love, obedience, &c., and therefore ought to be more frequently insisted on, in proportion to their present use.

4. There are many scenes of providence and grace to take place in the universe, before the general Restoration; such as the Millennium, the calling of the Jews, the universal spread of the gospel through the earth, &c. These things are much nearer, and therefore the Scripture speaks more of them; and what God speaks most of, in his word, we should discourse of most to the people.

5. This doctrine, though it may have its use in converting men; and certainly enables those who believe it, to set forth the terrors of the Lord, and his mercies, in a more striking manner than otherwise they could; yet it is chiefly useful in comforting the people of God, and, in part relieving them from that bitter anguish which their tender minds feel, from the consideration of the vast numbers that perish; and, therefore, may not be so proper for a popular audience as many other subjects.

6. The plan of this grand Restoration is so vast, includes so many different and seemingly contradictory dispensations, that it cannot be fairly stated, and fully defended, in one sermon, and especially the objections answered; and many persons are not capable of taking in and digesting at once, so many subjects as are necessary to the understanding of this matter, and have not patience to attend to a long series of demonstrations, arguments, and proofs; and, therefore, this doctrine should not be introduced by any man, in any place, unless he has opportunity, to give it a fair investigation; and, therefore, I never mention it at all, at my first preaching in any place; nor unless I have sufficient opportunities to discuss it.

7. *Christ* says to his disciples—"I have yet many things to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now." St. John xvi. 12. And St. Paul says—"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal; even as unto babes in *Christ*: I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye are not able to bear it; neither yet now are ye able." 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age; even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised, to discern both good and evil." Heb. v. 14. Therefore, as the Saviour and his apostles adapted their subjects and discourses to the circumstances of their hearers, and treated them in a gentle manner; so should we. Prudence, patience, and care, should always be used in discoursing on a doctrine so deep and awful as this; and, especially, as it hath been so little known of late ages.

8. I would wish to establish well the first principles of Christianity, before I meddle with any thing else; and as to the doctrine of the Restoration, I would rather that it should seem to be naturally inferred from truths already known, than delivered as an independent system: I, therefore, seldom or ever make it a leading point in my discourses; but sometimes lead to it, as a natural consequence of what has been said. After all, I would choose that men should discover it themselves, by carefully reading the Scriptures, without prejudice, believing them to be strictly true; by living in love towards God and man; by walking in humility, often reflecting on their former estate; and constantly viewing the sufficiency of *Christ*, and the boundless love of their great Creator; rather than to learn it of any man, far less still, of such an unworthy worm as I am.

9. As far as I know my own heart, truth, in love is my constant aim. I am unconnected with any party; and am not so prejudiced in favour of any thing that I hold, but that I would willingly be convinced in any thing, by proper evidence; and when so convinced, I am ready to retract publicly. As, therefore, I do not feel myself personally interested to support the system, right or wrong; I have, therefore, dwelt much less upon it, than most preachers do upon their particular sentiments.

10. When I first embraced these views I was obliged to give some account of my reasons; and I chose rather to do it by writing than preaching. Accordingly, I published my sentiments, and answers to many objections; which publications being in the hands of those to whom I preached, made it less necessary for me to discourse upon those matters in public, or even in private, as I could refer to what I had written; and with the same view, I am inclined to pub-

lish these familiar discourses, which we have had together; after which it will be less necessary than ever for me to preach the Restoration publicly; yet, I will not wholly avoid it at convenient times, and in proper circumstances.

11. Lastly, as I know so much of the nature of man, as to be sensible that he turns, with disgust and loathing from what is perpetually crammed down his throat; but relishes that which he falls upon, as it were accidentally, and comes into by little and little; I have always made it a rule never to introduce it, in public or private, unless where it was earnestly desired, nor ever to continue it long together; and, above all, never to question people upon the subject, after discoursing upon it; asking them, saying, Do you believe it? &c. Nor would I ever wish to press them with the arguments at once and oblige them immediately to yield; as this kind of conduct, so far from answering any good purposes, commonly sets them against what is thus intruded upon them. It is the best way to give time and leisure to persons, whom you would wish to convince; and let them exercise their own faculties.

Friend.—I must confess that what you have advanced is highly satisfactory to me, and I trust will be so to many others who may read these conversations, which I hope to have the pleasure of seeing in print before long; and in the mean time, I wish for a blessing to attend your labours, and that you may be an instrument of much good to mankind in your day and generation, and that you may obtain a crown of life from the Lord the righteous judge, in the day of his appearing.

Minister.—I thank you most kindly for your benevolent wishes. I heartily wish the same blessing may come to yourself. And if I have been an instrument of giving you any satisfaction, let all the glory be to God, but let me have an interest in your prayers.

END OF THE DIALOGUES.

LECTURE.

The following is taken from a course of Lectures on the Prophecies, by the Reverend Author of the preceding Dialogues.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."—1 *Cor.* xv. 24-28.

This is the only passage of Scripture that contains any intimation of Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father, but as it was written by divine inspiration, this grand event and closing scene is by no means to be disputed, or explained away.

In discoursing upon this glorious subject, I shall follow the order of the words, and make such remarks as may present themselves to my mind as I pass along.

Then cometh the end, &c. These words teach us the important truth that the Mediatorial dispensation will as certainly come to a period or close, as any other dispensation ever did; though it is by no means of so short a duration as many take it to be. Some make it to end at the second coming of Christ; and others immediately after the general Judgment: but I have in the course of these Lectures given my thoughts so fully upon these opinions and the reasons why I cannot concur with them, as that I trust I have no need to repeat them in this place. We may here once more observe, that the word rendered *everlasting*, does not signify *endless*, even when applied to the kingdom of Christ; (as it frequently is in the Scriptures) since here it is positively asserted, that there shall be *an end* to the glorious kingdom of the Son of God, so often called *an everlasting kingdom* in our translation: but which I humbly apprehend, might better be called a *kingdom of ages.*

Then cometh the end; when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; but not until he hath put down all rule and authority, and all power. For the Kingdom was given to him for this very purpose, and this he will certainly accomplish, to the praise and glory of his name. His engagements he must fulfil, according to the nature and tenor of the counsel of peace, which was between the Father and his will beloved Son; for (as the prophet says) "The counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zec.

vi. 13. And according to the inspired language of Isaiah, there seems to have been the nature of a covenant between the Father and the Son, which appears in his being given for a covenant to the people, chap. xlii. 6; xlix. 8, and the words in chap. liii. 10, 11, are fairly capable of being rendered in such a manner as to make a mutual agreement evident. If he shall make his soul a sin offering, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied, &c.

And the words of Christ himself in St. John vi. 37, 40, seem very plainly to imply that he came down from heaven upon an errand of great importance, and which he had engaged to execute, nor can he leave any part of his work unfinished.

God the Father having given him all things without exception, according to those texts more than once already quoted in this work (St. John iii. 35; xiii. 3; xvii. 2, compared with St. Matthew xi. 27, and St. Luke x. 22) expects that the Son of his love will put a final and total end to all rebellion, and bring all the rightful subjects of the Almighty Sovereign back again to their allegiance. And Jesus evidently considers himself under obligations to perform this great work before he delivers up the kingdom to the Father. And I cannot but think that he is fully qualified for the performance of all that he hath engaged to do, and that he will certainly accomplish it.

For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

It is of absolute necessity that his reign shall endure until there is no more opposition, no more rebellion, or disobedience, to be found in the wide creation. "Jehovah saith unto my Adonai, or Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Psal. cx. 1. This the modern Jews apply to David, but it is certain that in our Saviour's time they understood it to relate to Christ, or the Messiah, the Son of David, although they were puzzled at our Lord's question, and were not able to resolve him how the Messiah could be born the Son, and Lord of David at the same time. See St. Matth. xxii. 42–45; St. Mark xii. 35–37; St. Luke xx. 41–44.

And St. Peter applies those words of David directly to Jesus, saying: "For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself: The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Acts ii. 34–36.

When our blessed Saviour was exalted at the Father's right hand according to the Scriptures, then this promise began to be fulfilled. He was then set "Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world (or age) but also in that which is to come." And the Father "put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." Ephes. i. 21, 22. Our Lord "is gone to heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him." 1 Peter iii. 22.

Thus all things were put under him in the divine purpose, without exception, but all things are not yet put under him in the sense of these words in 1 Cor. xv. 25, because it is said that *he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet:* which plainly shews that it is not yet the case. And the words of the apostle in this epistle to the Hebrews, Heb. ii. 8, expresses the same idea, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him; but now we see not yet all things put under him." Here it is evident, that in the purpose of God all things are put under Christ, and subjected to him in so universal a manner, as there is not the least exception; yet it is equally evident that all things are not yet actually put under him: the divine counsels, respecting this important matter, are not fulfilled before the eyes of creatures: but they must be. All the enemies of our Lord must come to be subject to him in a sense far different from what ever hath yet taken place; and Christ must reign until this grand purpose shall be fully accomplished. God says, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear." Isai. xlv. 23. And the apostle St. Paul, after speaking of our dear Saviour's amazing humiliation even to the death of the cross, says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. ii. 9–11. When this comes to be actually fulfilled, then it may be truly said, that all our Lord's enemies are in the strictest sense put under his feet, but not before; and this is spoken of by the Apostle as something future, and far remote.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death; or more properly, *Death, the last enemy shall be destroyed.*

There are some who would wish to confine this destruction to the death of the body, or that which is called the natural death; but to me it appears, that every thing that bears the name of *death* in the sacred Scriptures, must be included, and is really intended here. Death and misery of every kind shall be abolished, done away, swallowed up in victory, &c., and nothing but life and happiness shall remain. I cannot help considering this as the genuine sense and meaning of the following glorious promises. He will swallow up

death in victory; and Adonia Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces," &c. Isaiah xxv. 8.

I will ransom them (even such who perish in their iniquity and sin, as is evident from the context) from the power of the grave: (or hell) I will redeem them from death: O death I will be thy plagues: O grave (or hell) I will be thy destruction: repentence shall be hid from mine eyes." Hosea xiii. 14.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. xxi. 4.

Then shall the song of triumph be sung, "Death is swallowed up in victory!" And the great and mighty challenge shall be proclaimed through all the empire of Jehovah, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave (or hell) where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. But surely while sin, which is the sting of death, is found in existence, and while pain, sorrow, crying, &c., continue in the universe, it can hardly be said, that death is swallowed up in victory; and while the second death lasts, which is certainly the most terrible kind of death, how can it be said, O death where is thy sting? and, O grave (or hell) where is thy victory? But to me, scarce any thing appears more plain, than the certain annihilation or total destruction of all that ever bore the name of death. Then it may be truly said, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so hath grace reigned through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v. 20 21.

But prior to the total destruction of death, all other enemies, that is, all rebellious creatures, shall be humbled, and shall willingly submit to Jesus, and be his enemies no longer: for certainly at the time when the last enemy shall be destroyed, no enemies can remain in the universe.

For he hath put all things under his feet: but when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him.

This reasoning of the apostle seems almost self evident: for nothing can be more manifest, than that he (the eternal Father) who put all things under Christ the Son, is himself excepted. Even as Pharaoh said to Joseph, when he made him governor or ruler over all the land of Egypt.

"Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art! Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh saith unto Joseph, See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had: and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." Gen. xli. 39–44.

The whole of this transaction was a wonderful type, and a most beautful illustration of the subject now upon.

Pharaoh set up Joseph over the land of Egypt because there was none so discreet and wise as he was, that understood the matter so well, was so competent to every part of the business, and that would be so faithful and diligent in the discharge of the same. Pharaoh in choosing Joseph, and placing him over all the land, shewed his own wisdom and discernment to be great. Even so the wisdom and goodness of God shone conspicuously in placing his dear Son in so glorious and important a situation. For where is there one in heaven or earth worthy to be named in comparison with Jesus? so prudent, so wise, so faithful, so just, so competent to every part of his work? The Father hath therefore entrusted him with all the concerns of the wide extended universe, as Pharaoh did Joseph with the land of Egypt, and all things therein.

Pharaoh gave Joseph full power, and unlimited and absolute authority over all his people, but excepted himself, in the same manner as the apostle declares the Father to be excepted. *It is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him.*

But this exception being expressly made (though it was evidently implied in the nature of the thing) plainly shews that none else can possibly be excepted, whether things in heaven, things on earth, or things under the earth. Christ is truly and really over all, (the Father only excepted) *God blessed forever.* Rom. ix. 5. * * * *

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

The time, the glorious time will come, when all things shall be willingly subject to the Son of God, and shall submit to his control. When this event takes place, and there is not an enemy remaining in all the universe, then shall the Son of God deliver up the kingdom to the Father, in the most grand, glorious, and honourable manner, and be himself also subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. * * * *

I have ventured far already, but cannot feel myself willing to quit the subject, without once more endeavouring to represent its beauties in the form of a speech, which I trust will not be altogether unworthy of the Son of God to utter in the presence of his Father, and all the heavenly host on that resplendent day.

Speech of the King of kings and Lord of lords, upon his resigning his Imperial dignity to God the Father, having forever put down all rule, and authority, and power.

"My Father and my God, behold me, and the numerous children which thou hast given me, as the reward of my labour, and the fruit of my pain. I have at length subdued all my enemies, and brought them freely and heartily to submit to my sceptre. Long and severe was the struggle, and many that loved me doubted whether I should ever so far prevail as to bring my greatest enemies to be my friends; but I have succeeded according to thy will, and thy glorious purposes. Thou didst create all to glorify thy name, to enjoy thy love, and to be happy in beholding the light of thy countenance, and when some of thy creatures fell from their first estate, thou didst appoint me to reclaim and restore them.

"Father, the long expected time is at last arrived, when thy Son having accomplished thy designs, approaches thy throne to resign his kingdom to thee. Thou didst give him power over all, and he hath given eternal life to all which thou gavest him. All that thou, O Father, gavest me, have at length willingly returned unto me, and behold I present them before thee this day, reconciled to thee, to me, and to each other. See, my Father, and behold throughout this mighty throng, there is not one knee but what bows in the most cordial manner, not a tongue but is ready to shout thy praise, nor an heart that doth not overflow with love to thee. All are thy willing and obedient subjects, reclaimed from all their evil ways, and forever confirmed in the purest habits of goodness. Look, my Father, through the wide extended universe, for thou beholdest all thy works in every situation with the utmost ease, see, there is not one rebellious creature to be found! Where sin once reigned and abounded, grace now reigns and abounds much more. All confusion and disorder now destroyed, the whole creation exhibits one great scene of peace, harmony, and divine order. All creatures are now wholly delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. All things in the universe are gathered together in one, are reconciled to thy government, and conformed to thine image and shall never more go astray. Sin, sorrow, crying, pain, and death shall never more be known in thy extensive empire. Thou shalt be all, and in all. Thy subjects no longer need a Mediator, they are all righteous and holy, and capable of beholding thy face with joy. I have seen the travail of my soul, and am forever satisfied. Thou hast fulfilled all thy promises to me in the completest manner, I have also performed my words to all my people, whom I have redeemed to thee, and from this day resign them to thee. Now they are all one, as thou Father and I are one; one spirit rules in them all; they have all the same designs, even to glorify thy name, and promote the happiness of each other.

"Thou art now ALL IN ALL, and let all thy works praise thee.

"Thy glory shall endure for ever; thou shalt rejoice in all thy works. This is the scene which completes that joy which was set before me, for which I endured the cross, despising the shame.

"To this bright and glorious day I directed my view; I beheld all things put under me, I saw, beyond the darkness and obscurity of sin, pain, and death, the glorious day of light arise on all thy creatures.

"It is come, it is come, this is the day I looked for. The night is forever past, and eternal day is risen upon all creation, to set no more. Shout, O Heavens, it is done, it is done. Let all creatures adore thee, for this is the display of thy glorious, wise and gracious designs.

"Thou didst entrust me with the execution of thy wonderous plan, and this I have completed. Henceforth I resign the kingdom to thee; be thou thyself the Lord over all.

"In my whole process I have always been an example to all my flock, of which I am still, and shall remain, the Shepherd and head; I will therefore shew an example to all thy creatures that shall never be forgotten, which shall forever confirm thy authority over them; behold, I lay my sceptre and my crown at thy feet, and profess before all the hosts of heaven, and the numerous armies that acknowledge my sway, that great and mighty as I am, I am subject unto thee. I bow myself before thine awful throne: I submit to thee as all thy creatures have voluntarily submitted to me. Behold me as the head of all principality and power, and with me behold all thy creatures submit and bow to thy sovereign sway."

Here the scene of divine revelation closes, GOD IS ALL IN ALL. I can go no further. The astonishing subject drinks up all my spirits! I am lost and swallowed up in the vast unbounded ocean of love!

O let my soul absorbed be,
While God doth me surround!
As a small drop in the vast sea
Is lost and can't be found!

"Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth;" and he shall reign forever and ever. Amen.

THOUGHTS

ON

THE DIVINE GOODNESS,

RELATIVE TO THE

GOVERNMENT OF MORAL AGENTS,

PARTICULARLY DISPLAYED IN

FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

"God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 2 Tim. ii. 4.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

FERDINAND OLIVIER PETITPIERRE,

FORMERLY MINISTER OF CHAUX-DE-FOND.

PHILADELPHIA:

GIHON, FAIRCHILD & CO.

1843.

PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

The reader of the following admirable treatise will naturally feel a curiosity to know something of its author. That he was a good man, a sincere Christian, gifted with a sound mind and clear discriminative powers, no one it seems to me can reasonably doubt, but our acquaintance with his life is extremely limited and imperfect. We know, indeed, that he was a native of the canton of Neufchâtel, Switzerland, but of the time of his birth, of his family and connexions, we know nothing. He was a minister of the gospel at Chaux-de-Fonds, formerly a small village, but now a considerable town, eight or ten miles from the city of Neufchâtel, the capital of the canton. This was probably about 1770. Here by a very careful and impartial study of the Bible, guided by an earnest desire to gain a knowledge of the truth, pure truth, he was brought at last to an unwavering faith in the infinite goodness of God, and in the final holiness and happiness of all men. Nor did he shun to avow and proclaim so great truths. But this frank and conscientious course soon involved him in very serious difficulties. A persecuting spirit has marked the history of the dogma of endless torments in every age and every place where it has existed; and Petitpierre was left to experience the "tender mercies" of that harsh creed which he denied. He was most unjustly and cruelly persecuted, was disgraced, deposed, deprived of the means of support at home, and virtually driven an exile to other lands. But the reader must hear him speak on this subject. I translate a passage from the second edition of his treatise. Speaking of the great advantages he gained by an impartial study of the scriptures, he adds—

"It is true that it has sometimes exposed me to some temporal inconveniences. I was a minister of the gospel. In assuming that office I took an oath at the hands of the clergy that I would *sacrifice my body, my life and my estate to maintain the word of the Lord.* I have consequently desired to proclaim the counsel or plan of God according to his words without any farther regard to the received doctrine than prudence dictated. The clergy without deciding upon the truth or falsehood of my doctrine, forbid me to preach it, and imposed upon me a law of very rigorous silence. I could not submit to any law that violated my conscience, and was deposed. As I had no means of support but what my lost benefice afforded, I went to a foreign country to gain a livelihood, and by my labour to gather wha would suffice for my necessities the remainder of my days. In this it has pleased God to prosper me beyond my expectations. And now, thanks to the divine Providence, I am free from worldly anxieties and at liberty to speak the truth as I find it in his word, and I employ the happy leisure which his goodness affords me in the preparation of this work upon the plan of God, that I may do my duty in this respect, in the only way that is now left me, and finish my career in this world as I began it, *maintaining the word of the Lord.*"

On leaving Switzerland, he took up his residence in London, where it seems he spent several years, but whether the treatise before us was written there or afterwards on the continent, I am unable to say. It is evident from the passage above, that it was not written till after he had been engaged in business sometime, and probably had retired. The following treatise first appeared in French at Amsterdam, in 1786, and under the title; "Le Plan de Dieu envers les Hommes, tel qu'il la manifesté dans la Nature et dans la Grace." *The Plan of God towards men, as he has manifested it in nature and grace.* It constitutes, however, but a part of the design which its author had formed, and which was to have been filled up by three other treatises, thus: The first part, which we here present, treats of *the infinite goodness of God.* The second was to have treated of *man, natural or animal, and spiritual.* The third of *the salvation of all men*; and *the knowledge of the truth necessary to their being saved.* And the fourth of *the revelation of the truth in nature and in grace.* In 1791, when a new edition of this treatise "carefully revised" was published in Amsterdam, the author expressed the hope that he should be able in a short time to give the second part of his work to the public, but added that if any unforeseen obstacle should prevent its appearance, this treatise which he had already sent forth might be regarded as complete in itself, "a treatise," he says, *on the infinite goodness of God*; and, strange to say, this sublime subject is as new as it is interesting." We know not that any other part of the work ever appeared.

The call for a new edition in the space of five years, is an evidence that it met with a very respectable sale. Indeed the English translator refers to the approbation it received on the continent, the ardour with which it was

sought, and the difficulty of obtaining copies in England as reasons for his undertaking a translation. This was in 1788, but two years after its first publication at Amsterdam. Whether a second edition has appeared in England, I cannot say, but it is well known to have gone through two or three editions in the United States, the first of which, I believe, was that of Walpole, N. H., 1801.

I need not attempt an analysis of the work, nor is it necessary to say a word in commendation of it. Those who have read it will not require this at my hands; those who have not, of whatever creed or communion they may be, still owe their heads and their hearts a service which they cannot too speedily pay. Let some of the opposers of Universalism refute it if they can, and if they cannot it is time they abandoned a confession of faith, which virtually denies the fundamental truth of this book as well as of the New Testament, that—God is Love. I cannot conclude without expressing an earnest wish that every Universalist in the country would read with carefulness and prayer this treatise, and assist in sending it far and wide among those who with all their self-complacency are yet ignorant of the true God, the Father, who is the Saviour of all men. Thomas J. Sawyer.

New York, June, 1843.

PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

The translator of the following pages having witnessed the approbation they met with abroad, the ardour with which they were sought, and the difficulty with which they were obtained; thinks it may be rendering service to the cause of religion, and contributing to the happiness of mankind, to make them easy of access, in a nation distinguished by its literature, and which in theology and philosophy has produced so many luminaries.

The author, a native of Neufchâtel, must be well known to many in this country, having resided in its capital for several years. All who were acquainted with him there, or in Switzerland, admired and honoured him. If in its tenets he differs from those universally held in the Christian, even protestant churches, the candid and judicious reader will not be repulsed by the cry of heresy, for it is to truths thus stigmatized, that the reformation owed its rise. Let them read, examine, and determine for themselves.

Nor let the humble pious follower of the gospel take the alarm, or apprehend the motives to virtue will be weakened, and mankind grow more licentious. To behold the plan of the Deity, as more consistent with his nature and attributes, and more merciful to his creatures, can never be an incentive to vice. *Fear*, is indeed one powerful restraint on imperfect beings, but it must be a rational fear, and not such as has given rise to infidelity in thousands, or which, if believed, leads to despair. Besides, let me ask, have the terrors of the Lord, when represented in all the horrors of never ending misery, been sufficient to deter many from offending, who have been familiar with the idea from their infancy? Universal observation shows the contrary. Our Saviour *draws us by the cords of love*. But if there is a wretch so base *as to sin because grace has abounded*, and with dauntless effrontery ventures to challenge the power and justice of his Maker—let him learn that in proportion to his guilt and depravity, will be his future punishment both in degree and duration. But let the honour of the wise and merciful Creator be vindicated, and mankind be taught to consider him as altogether amiable; whose severities are as much the effect of his goodness, as his rewards. Thus shall his love, and his fear arise together in our hearts; thus will he be known, and honoured, and *wisdom be justified of her children*.

Thirst of fame is disregarded by one who remains concealed, but though I wish to derive no personal merit as a translator, I would carefully avoid diminishing that of the author; to whose sentiments it shall be my endeavour to do justice, by a faithful but not a tedious translation. All who are conversant with the nature of the French language, know that it admits of a certain declamatory style which they call *unction*, and which does not so well correspond with the genius of the English. Entirely to divest this work of its original idiom, would perhaps be to rob it of that spirit and energy, by which the author has distinguished it. The reader is therefore solicited, if in the course of this translation some deviations from the established mode of English diction should be found unavoidable; candidly to place them to this account. They will occur as seldom as possible, for though nobler motives than gratifying the ear by the harmony of flowing periods, actuate the person who gives this essay to the public, yet, as far as sense and sound can be conciliated, the translator would not wish to deprive it even of that recommendation.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

To *render man universally and perfectly happy, seems to be the plan on which the Supreme Creator has established his moral government: and the method he employs* to compass an end so worthy of its author; *is that of enlightening their minds.* From whence it follows, that from the knowledge of this plan, may be derived just views of that felicity which the greatest and best of beings, has graciously intended to dispense to the children of men; and of the means by which he will conduct them to it, *the knowledge of the truth.*

This system is clearly expressed in that passage of Scripture, which I have made choice of in the title of this work, where the apostle declares that, *God will have all men to be saved:* this is their destination, *and to come at the knowledge of the truth,* is the mean by which he will raise them to it. I therefore dedicate the following pages to the examination and developement of these sublime words of St. Paul.

The plan of God towards mankind, is in nothing different from religion itself considered in its theory. For though religion taken in a general view is the science of happiness and of salvation, yet it may be divided into the two branches, of *theory* and *practice.* In its theory it holds up to us, salvation as the destination to which God by his providence and grace calls us: thus far it is the plan of our Great Creator, which I shall endeavour to illustrate in this work. But when taken in a practical view, it shews us salvation as the grand end we are invariably to propose to ourselves, and to which we are constantly to tend, by exerting all our efforts to the enlightening of our understandings, and the sanctifying of our hearts. In this point of view, religion is that part of his plan which the Supreme Being has assigned to us, that we may submit with docility to his government, and thereby become worthy of his benevolent designs towards us, or, as the apostle expresses it, *be workers together with him.*

Though the practical part of religion is of superior importance, that even the most perfect theory separated from it is so totally useless, that St. James represents a faith of that nature as dead. Yet it is of the theory of religion that I mean to treat, as that is incomparably more corrupted and disfigured by error, as I shall shew by explaining my reasons more particularly.

Although mankind are universally made capable of knowing the truth, their progress towards it is slow and obstructed by many difficulties, and amidst their almost imperceptible advances, ignorance, imagination and passion, have leisure sufficient left them, to change the truth of God into a lie, Rom. i. 25, that is to corrupt and falsify the first ideas of truth, even though revealed by himself. Their primitive ignorance renders them strangely presumptuous and decisive, their gross imagination, obscuring reason, has served them as a guide, insinuating itself as a judge of things spiritual, which belong exclusively to the more noble faculty of the mind.

But above all, self-love, temporal interest, sloth, vanity, pride, and a long list of other corrupt passions; make them deviate and wander through a maze of the most absurd, and sometimes the most monstrous errors; which they never fail to associate with the truths of religion, however incompatible. And as these errors are the unhappy effects of passion, they are afterwards supported by it. How often do men maintain them with a warmth bordering on fury, and impose them on the faith of others, with an inhuman ferocity, deciding for the rest of mankind, and even for posterity, by a plurality of voices, what they shall in future be obliged to believe, or possess as the truth revealed by God, under pain of damnation in the world to come, and frequently of the most cruel sufferings in this, such are the bitter fruits, the sad but inevitable effects of the ignorance, the imagination, and the passions of mankind, even under that dispensation of light which God has vouchsafed them. Deplorable effects! which by the obstinate deist, are charged upon religion itself. What I have said on the corruption of truth in the hands of man, is no more than what fatal experience has proved more or less in every age.

To what else are we to ascribe that strange fatality, by which we see the absurd side of questions, though never so revolting and extravagant, prevailing over the simple, natural, and rational; almost whenever they have been agitated? Such absurd errors when once received, and consecrated by public authority, and by their antiquity become the formidable obstacles of truth, and gain such a fatal ascendancy even over the minds of those whose understandings reject them, as leads them to suppress the truth, and tacitly to immolate it at the shrine of falsehood, by imposing upon it the most rigorous silence; leaving to error, known to be such; the exclusive privilege of appearing publicly, and of perpetuating itself by being openly and freely taught to the multitude. And can the sacred rights of truth be thus misconceived? I say misconceived, for who that properly knows their value, can dare to trample them under foot? but when we reflect on the obstacles she meets with, may we not be tempted for a moment to believe, as some have boldly advanced, that she was of a nature too sublime and elevated for man, who instead of being formed capable of receiving her, was made the eternal, and melancholy sport of ignorance and error. But far be from us a

thought so contrary to the plan of infinite wisdom; *who wills that all men should be saved, and come at the knowledge of the truth*, consequently he has created them for it, notwithstanding their original ignorance, their gross imaginations, and turbulent passions.

Now, it is on the theory of religion that the evils resulting from the above causes have principally fallen: its admirable morality has better resisted the contagion: though when we see on the one hand a thousand dangerous illusions and superstitions, corrupting its purity, and on the other, the motives to virtue, which are the very essence of morality, and are derived from its theory, perverted, enfeebled, enervated, and almost annihilated; we must lament that it has not wholly escaped the infection. What then can be more necessary than to disencumber religion from the errors which corrupt it, and to present it to mankind in its primitive purity! this shall be my endeavour in this treatise, by faithfully displaying the eternal plan of divine government as made known by God himself, both by nature and revelation.

It is in this two-fold manner, that the source of all truth has communicated to us the scheme of his mercy. First, by a *natural revelation*, by which He enlightens our reason, in offering to its contemplation, the admirable works of creation. Secondly, by a *supernatural revelation*, by which He condescends to supply the original weakness of our rational powers, and gives us his word; as a more perfect and more efficacious assistance.

It is to our reason that God addresses himself in both these revelations; with this capital difference however, that in the former, what we know of the being, perfections, and designs of God, must be deduced from the contemplation of nature, and result from our own discoveries: whereas in the latter, we must only attend with humility, and docility, and comprehend him who speaks for the purpose of enlightening us; for reason cannot be benefited by what it does not understand.

The question why God has revealed himself in these two ways is not proper to be discussed here; one very remarkable observation may however be made, which is founded on their perfect agreement. For as the design of our Creator is to bring us to the knowledge of the truth, it is impossible that he should deceive his creatures, and not be himself the *God all of truth*: consequently his revelations far from contradicting each other, must be found in perfect harmony.

But as God has manifested himself to us in his works, and in his word, it is in these two sacred sources, and in these alone, that we are to seek for the knowledge of his plan, and not in the opinions of our fellow mortals, which are so different, and often so opposite. We may, and we certainly ought to consult them, and examine carefully the reasons on which they are grounded, in order to profit by their labours, and use them as succours for the better comprehending our Maker, but it is God, and God alone, to whom we are obliged indispensably to attend; and by the touchstone of reason and scripture, must every human opinion be tried

When we consult reason for the proper understanding of Holy Writ, we draw at once from these two sources. When, for instance, any passage there is susceptible, by the ambiguity of its expression, of two different meanings, because, the same term may sometimes have a literal, and sometimes a figurative sense annexed to it, it is then the province of reason to determine which of the two is the sense of the passage in question, by adopting that which agrees with the nature of things, of God, of man; and rejecting that which is unnatural, absurd, and false. Such is the use we are to make of reason, in the interpretation of Scripture.

And here I solemnly protest, in the presence of the Almighty, that in reading and meditating on his word, to know his will and designs towards us, I have with sincerity, and in his fear, adhered to this rule, I have sought truth in its purity, with simplicity of heart, without hope, or fear of its agreeing or disagreeing, with that catechism which I had been taught to receive in my youth, without sufficient examination; well convinced, that if such, or such opinions were true, I should find them confirmed in Scripture; if false, they would not become true, by my obstinately persisting to believe them without examination; so that I had nothing to loose, or rather I had every thing to gain, by bringing them sincerely to this test; since the only thing of importance to me was to fly from error, and *to come at the knowledge of the truth*.

And this impartial study of Scripture has been attended with great advantage to me. It has confirmed and established me in some of my former opinions, which I have found to be divine truths, and opened my eyes upon others, which I have perceived to be the offspring of prejudice, and error.

It has certainly exposed me to some temporal inconvenience, in the exercise of my ecclesiastical functions; as instead of examining the truth, or falsehood, of my doctrine, the clergy condemned me to silence; which being contrary to the dictates of my conscience, was followed by my deposition. Thus circumstanced, I was obliged to seek in a foreign country that protection and independence which my own refused me. The success of my endeavours having placed me above the reach of temporal cares, I devote the leisure with which providence has blessed me, to the interest of truth, and the benefit of mankind, adhering scrupulously throughout this work to the rules I have laid down, consulting only reason and the word of God, and advancing nothing, but what appears to me, agreeable to these guides; convinced that were I to violate this sacred obligation, I should be guilty of the most audacious and criminal prevarication.

As I disclaim all other authorities, however useful to my subject; so I equally renounce all personal controversy; and confine myself

entirely to the combat between truth, and error.

I mean not however by these protestations to prepossess the world in favour of my tenets. I have laid down the only rules by which they must stand, or fall; therefore setting aside the prejudices of education, and carefully examining what I shall advance, let every one judge, and determine for themselves. Whoever proceeds otherwise, can never read with advantage, not even Scripture itself: but resembles those whom St. Paul describes, as *ever learning, and never able to come at the knowledge of the truth*, as the mass of prejudices, form that veil upon the heart, with which the same apostle reproaches the Jews; and which made a learned divine of this century observe, in a Latin epigram on the Bible, *That it was a book where every one sought his opinions, and where every one found them.* This has given occasion to the deist to reproach revelation with obscurity; whereas the whole of religion, if it may be resolved into the designs of God towards his creatures, and what he requires of them towards the rendering them fit objects of his favour; is sufficiently clear to all, who with the docility of little children will listen to its instructions, and obey its dictates.

It may appear to some necessary previous to my present undertaking, that I should prove the divine authority of that revelation on which it depends. But this subject has been so frequently, and so ably treated by numbers, that I think it needless to enter upon it again, any farther than its celestial origin may be deducible by every candid mind, from the beauty, grandeur, and harmony of a design; which comprehending so many ages since the beginning of the world, cannot be the production of an impostor: which is a sufficient internal proof of its divinity.

Religion has, in our age, sustained on every side a multitude of attacks from different quarters, and under every disguise; which as they have occasioned the discussion of many important questions; have led to an examination favourable to the cause of truth. The objections of the deist to Christianity are of two kinds: the one, levelled against its external proofs and documents, such as the miracles, and prophecies it contains; the other, relating to its substance, and attacking its doctrines whether of theory, or practice. With respect to the former, they have been answered in a manner that has turned to the advantage of religion: but I am far from being able to say as much of the replies that have been offered in defence of its doctrines; here the combatants have not stood on equal ground, for its advocates in vindicating the dogmas of religion, have thought themselves obliged to maintain them, not in the simplicity of holy writ, but as they were taught in different communions of Christians, and represented in the creeds and confessions of their churches; hence a number of objections to which no satisfactory answer has ever been given, because on those terms they are absolutely insurmountable, since it is impossible to make light agree with darkness. To give but one example of these triumphant objections: how can it even be made comprehensible that a being infinitely good can consign the greatest part of his creatures over to never ending torments? It is however necessary that these objections of the second class should be answered, and that religion should be disengaged from every thing that may tarnish and obscure it lustre. For as long as it shall present a hideous mixture of truth and error, it cannot carry with it that light and evidence, which are necessary to convince the understanding, and gain the heart, but will expose men to baneful illusions, cruel doubts, and even to the fatal danger of falling at length into incredulity, and irreligion.

With respect to the form of this work, I am not solicitous to clothe it in the ornaments of flowery language; simplicity, perspicuity, and evidence, have ever appeared more attractive in my eyes. I confide in the majesty, and importance of my subject to interest my reader, and captivate his attention. And what subject can be more sublime than to explain *the plan of God, and his counsels towards man!* August by its *author*; precious and interesting by its *object;* luminous and harmonious by *the value of its materials, and the beauty of its structure*; elevated and delightful by its *tendency*; and sovereignly glorious and marvellous by *the amazing difficulty of its execution, and by the magnificence of its effects. Its author*, is He who is infinitely wise, good, and powerful; its *object*, is the universal and final happiness of the whole human race, without exception of a single individual; *the rich materials that compose it*, are those magnificent truths that go hand in hand, and by a natural connection, form the most beautiful whole that an intelligent being can possibly contemplate. *Its tendency*, that of bringing us all to the highest perfection, and the utmost happiness of which our natures are susceptible. And the difficulty of its execution, and the magnificence of its effects, no other, than rendering the human race, such as they have shewn themselves from the foundation of the world to the present moment; a race of beings plunged in the most profound darkness; lost in the most monstrous errors; degraded and tyrannized by the most disorderly and violent passions; odious by the most horrid and detestable crimes; unhappy, in their physical and moral state, by all these sources of dreadful misery; it is nothing less, than to render such beings, enlightened, rational and pure in their sentiments; amiable by every virtue, excellent by every action, and happy by their perfection, their celestial state, and above all by their glorious union with God himself! Of how little moment will the ornaments of diction appear to any one convinced of the importance, and elevated by the dignity of the subject. May its divine energy penetrate my heart, and I shall not fear of making my labours useful, and acceptable to the world.

OF THE

INFINITE GOODNESS OF GOD.

God is Love.—1 *John* iv. 8.

It is not necessary in a work of this nature, to enter into a complete detail on the existence and perfections of God; any farther than as they enable us to judge with certainty of his designs towards us. And His *infinite goodness* being the leading principle in the creation and government of moral agents; it is to the particular investigation of this goodness, I mean to confine myself principally, though I shall touch on His other perfections, when by so doing I can throw light upon my subject: which will be divided into three chapters; containing the *definition*, *proofs*, and *consequences* of the infinite goodness of God.

CHAPTER I.

Definition of the infinite goodness of God.

The infinite goodness of God is that constant disposition of his will; by which he determines to bestow upon his creatures, as much happiness as their natures are capable of admitting. And here we must distinguish four things, viz. the *nature*, the *design*, the *duration*, and the *effects* of this divine benevolence. And

First, In *its nature*, it is an invariable disposition, a constant, unalterable, in a word, an immutable goodness.

Secondly, *Its design*; to confer *good*, nothing *but good*, pure from every mixture of evil, and even *all possible good*; that is to say, all the good that such a being can dispense, and that the creature who is the object of it, can receive.

Thirdly, *Its duration*, which is boundless as eternity; for goodness to be infinite, must never cease from doing all the good it can, and consequently in an Eternal Being, must be exerted eternally.

Fourthly, *Its effects*, not only extend to all the intelligent beings of the universe, but even to all the creatures capable of distinguishing between pleasure and pain, for the divine goodness could not be infinite, if it did not embrace his immense family of sentient, as well as rational beings. But I shall here only consider that branch of it, which relates to man; because it is to human beings that scripture calls our attention more palticularly; and because it is infinitely more important to comprehend the designs of infinite benevolence towards us, whose duty it is to make suitable returns of love, and obedience.

But here an objection may be started which merits examination. May not all the beings in the universe be so connected in the general scheme of divine government, which embraces all in one compendious whole, as not to permit the separating a part, from the general system, in which, infinite wisdom may make one race of beings subservient to the greater, or general good of the rest?

That infinite goodness does, and ought to prefer a general, to a particular advantage, I am ready to allow; and therefore that He can expose one, or many of his creatures to a temporary evil, however great, when it is necessary to procure the good of a superior number. This, far from being inconsistent with the proposition I advance, is agreeable to the nature of intelligent creatures, and to the happness corresponding therewith: As I hope to make it appear, that the sufferings inflicted for the good of others, will, sooner or later, procure an increase of happiness to the individual who endured them; so that in the end he will perceive and acknowledge himself to be a gainer, by having thus contributed to the welfare of others.

But when by a strange supposition, which has not the least foundation, either in the nature of intelligent beings, or their happiness, we advance, that the infinite or eternal misery, not of a multitude, but even of an individual, must take place to procure the good of the rest; then it is evident that perfect benevolence can never admit so horrid a method into his plan: because in so doing he must commit an act of unjust and partial cruelty; an act, barbarous and tyrannical in respect to one creature, in order to procure the happiness of others. No, the being infinitely good, cannot at the same time be infinitely cruel; the detestable reason of superior strength is no argument with him; his goodness is true and genuine, consequently impartial and universal. He possesses in the inexhaustible treasures of his wisdom and power, sufficient sources of felicity for all his creatures; without being reduced to the dreadful expedient of making some the victims of others, or adopting means repugnant to the simplest ideas of goodness, and utterly incongruous with those we ought to entertain of the merciful and kind parent of the universe: who represents himself to us as tenderly concerned for the happiness of his children; which St. Paul calls, *the kindness and love of God towards men*, or as it is rendered in the original, *the philanthropy* of God. Are men miserable? it is termed *that infinite compassion*, he has for their wretchedness: are they irregular and vicious? it assumes the

tities of *forbearance*, *long-suffering*, and *patience*; but when by a sincere repentance they turn from their iniquity, then, it is his *clemency*, his *pardon*, his *mercy*, and his *grace*, that is extended towards them.

CHAPTER II.

Proofs of the infinite goodness of God.

To the proper demonstrating of this important, and fundamental principle, I must establish it on two evident proofs, one drawn from reason, the other from scripture.

And in doing this I shall shew, that it is impossible to form to ourselves, just notions of the adorable goodness of the Governor of the universe; unless we endeavour to know his other perfections. We must therefore consider Him, first, as the original cause of all things; and secondly, deduce from thence, his right to the character of the best, and most excellent of beings.

If God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, he must be the original cause of the universe: a being existing of himself, from whom all other beings derive existence: this idea must naturally present itself, when we ascend from the effect to the cause, and from this definition, which is certainly incontestible, we are led by a necessary conclusion, to the discovery of all his other perfections. It contains two important ideas; the one relative to the manner of his own independent existence: the other, to his agency, as the Creator of all other beings. All the attributes we discover in God must depend on one or other of these ideas; and arise either from his own self-existent nature or belong to his character as Creator, it is impossible to separate them. For if God is the spring and fountain of life, he cannot have derived it from any, but in a word exists necessarily. The same is true of all his attributes as Creator, such as he is, he has ever been, the perfections of his nature are eternal, and consequently exist necessarily in him; so that the Supreme Being is both in his nature and perfections, *eternal*, *independent*, *immutable and infinite*.

First, He is *eternal*, for having received nothing, he cannot possibly suffer any privation; and as he knew no commencement, he can know no end. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Secondly, *His absolute independence* flows from the same premises, and scripture everywhere abounds with the most positive declarations of this truth. "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?"

Thirdly, That the Most High is *immutable* in his being and perfections, is equally evident from his independent nature, which precludes every possibility of change; "He is always the same, the father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Fourthly, I have I advanced that God in his nature, and attributes, as our Creator, is *infinite*, uncircumscribed, unlimited. If his perfections are immutable, and can neither admit of increase or diminution, they are now what they have ever been, and what they will be throughout all eternity, *infinite*. If he possesses knowledge, it must pervade all things; if power, it must be uncontrolled; if goodness, it must extend to *all*; and will the greatest and most universal happiness. Such are the sublime ideas comprehended in *necessary existence*.

Let us for a moment contemplate this unfathomable, this astonishing being, who sits supreme, without rival or competitor; to raise our thoughts to Him, is to elevate them to the *Being of Beings*, the source of existence, or as he describes himself, the I AM. "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." But when we turn our eyes upon his creatures, what do we behold? but a borrowed and contingent existence which they hold by his grant, which at the moment of their creation, depended upon his will, and which every instant is subject to it? Thus their preservation is a continued creation, for in him we live, and move, and have our being

He is *eternal*, and *we are but of yesterday*: He is *independent*, whereas we, and all that surround us, are constantly deriving new supplies from Him; exposed to the loss of what we have, and needing new acquirements. He is *immutable*, always the same; in him is no succession, no modification, no transition from one condition to another. He is all that he can ever be, whereas his creatures are mutable, constantly affected by the objects which surround them, and perpetually passing through a variety of situations and circumstances. He is infinite in his essence and attributes as Creator, unconfined by space, or time, and fills immensity. The heaven of heavens cannot contain him, and all his glorious and adorable perfections, are as uncircumscribed as his essence. Whereas his creatures occupy but a small point in space, and an inconsiderable portion in time; they possess no quality, but in a degree equally limited with their nature; whatever progress they may make towards perfection, by the best improvement of their faculties, to whatever height they may elevate themselves, their knowledge and activity will ever remain confined within narrow bounds; and they will still continue at an infinite distance, from Him who fills heaven and earth, before whom the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

Let us proceed to the second idea contained in this definition, that God is the origin of existence to all inferior beings; and let us examine what perfections must reside in Him, as Creator of the universe.

The first attribute that strikes our minds, when we reflect on the production of the world, is power. St. Paul, speaking of the invisible things of God, which are clearly seen, calls our attention to his eternal power, which in an infinite Being, must of necessity be infinite. But should we not be disposed to admit the force of this argument, there is another more simple, consequently more evident; drawn from the very act of creation. To create! to produce from nothing, to give existence, to what was inanimate! demonstrates without doubt the highest extent of power; and is the noblest idea we can form of that attribute in our Maker. He who made me, who from nothing caused me to pass into existence, can do in, and for me, every thing that is consistent with the nature and essence he has conferred upon me. Therefore he is all-powerful with respect to me; this may with equal propriety be said of all the beings that compose the universe, as they are all creatures of his power. Scripture, when it informs us that with God all things are possible, has no term more emphatical by which to express his infinite power; and appeals to creation as its incontestible proof. "He calleth those things which be not, as though they were. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. For He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast. He said let there be light, and there was light."

Nor can we admit the irresistible and uncontrollable power of the Creator, without acknowledging at the same time, that it is not a blind principle, which produces its effect in a manner merely physical. The smallest attention to the beings which compose the world, is sufficient to discover indications of *wisdom* and *design*. Besides, when we behold it peopled with intelligent creatures distinguished by knowledge and design, must it not appear from thence, that he who made them, possesses these qualities in a much more eminent and superior degree. "Understand ye brutish among the people: He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?" Whence it follows, that the divine mind is infinitely intelligent, or endowed with understanding and will. His knowledge extends to all creatures. He sees at one glance all causes, and every subsequent effect, capable of resulting from them throughout all eternity. He contemplates by a single act that immense chain of consequences, that comprise all periods past, present, and future. Let us attend to the language of Scripture on this astonishing subject: "Great is the Lord, his understanding is infinite. There is no searching of his understanding. The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him, with whom we have to do. God is light, and in him is no darkness."

From the omniscience of God, we are led to infer his infinite wisdom, which consists in constantly proposing the best and most excellent end, and employing the most proper and efficacious means to obtain it. Thus his will being ever directed by his supreme wisdom, can never in any possible case degenerate into *fancy* or *caprice*. All his proceedings are the dictates and counsels of his eternal wisdom. The Lord of Hosts is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. The only wise God, because every subordinate degree of wisdom, that created intelligences may possess, bears no greater proportion to the fountain of knowledge, than a feeble spark, to a conflagrated world. Well therefore might the inspired apostle exclaim, when contemplating this amazing subject: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

Having shewn the infinite power and wisdom of the Creator of the universe, I come to the consideration of his boundless goodness. Nor will it be difficult to establish this interesting proposition from the theory already laid down. For if his wisdom in designing is a perfect security from that versatility which arises from ignorance, or caprice; it is evident he can never sport with the happiness of his creatures, and that when He determined to create them, he was actuated by some motive worthy of himself. Now his own advantage, or that of his creatures must have been the end in view. And is it possible that a necessarily existent, immutable and infinite being, who is all-sufficient, consequently totally disinterested in all he does, could propose any benefit to himself? or be influenced by any thing but the godlike satisfaction of opening the sources of bliss, and dispensing to his creatures that felicity, those rivers of pleasure which flow at his right-hand forever more? He knows what perfect happiness is, and the method of conferring it best adapted to the nature of his creatures. Thus the voice of reason loudly proclaims, that our Creator is our Father, a father whose love is infinite, because his goodness is unalterable.

Proofs of the infinite goodness of God taken from Scripture.

Scripture here opens a rich and abundant field for our contemplation; no subject is treated more repeatedly or emphatically, than that of divine goodness. The Supreme Being is there represented as our Father: doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not, thou O Lord art our Father: and it is by this tender appellation that our Saviour encourages

us to address Him; when he says, after this manner pray ye, Our Father, &c. He is styled the Father of mercies, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. The strongest and most lively images are employed to represent this disposition of God towards us, the riches of his goodness and forbearance, the tender mercies of our God; and an apostle writing to the Ephesians, prays, "that they being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height thereof."

But as it is not possible to select here all the passages of scripture that relate to this subject, I shall confine my observations to three, which have always appeared to me, expressive of peculiar energy. The first, is that in Isaiah, where God by the mouth of his prophet expostulates with and comforts his people. "Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee:" The love of a mother for her infant, is the strongest and most constant attachment we can conceive, I might say the most universal. For where is the animal, however weak and timid on other occasions, that has not courage sufficient to defend its young? and do we not consider with aversion and horror as a monster, a mother who by any other passion has stifled this sentiment of nature? But rare as these examples are, we are sometimes called to behold them. They may forget, yet will not I. His love is then superior to the strongest examples of it among men, it is constant, it is infinite; well then might the Psalmist declare with an unshaken confidence, "when my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

The second passage alluded to, is that in which our Saviour ascribes goodness in the superlative degree to God alone. "And behold one came and said unto him, good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God." Here the only begotten Son of God, the Saviour of the world, refuses to be called good; and expressly declares that title to belong to God alone. Are we then to conclude from these remarkable words, that there is no such thing as goodness among men; that parents have no love for their children, and above all, that our blessed Redeemer was destitute of goodness, and had no love for us? it cannot be taken by any one in this sense. For had the Supreme Creator endowed us with a nature averse to the exercise of this celestial virtue, would he ever have made it our duty, or have proposed himself as an example for our imitation, commanding us to be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful? And does he not condescend to borrow allusions from the tender tie of paternal affection whereby to express his own benevolent dispositions? Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: from whence it equally follows, that the love of parents for their offspring is not void of all goodness. But if we admit this, how much more readily must we acknowledge, that the Saviour of the world, he who though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich, was possessed of goodness in an eminent degree? Yet it is the same Jesus, whose love surpasseth knowledge, that says, why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, that is God. What then must have been his meaning, what the sense of these sublime words? Manifestly this: that the goodness of God being absolutely infinite, unlimited and unbounded, can never be compared with the same quality in his creatures, how excellent soever they may be, because *finite* can bear no proportion to *infinite*. It is true that the goodness and the wisdom of God, may reside in his creatures in a limited degree, as they are communicable perfections, but to possess these attributes infinitely, belongs to God alone, and is the exclusive privilege of a necessarily existent Being. He is called the only wise God, in the same sense in which our Saviour declares that he alone is good.

The third quotation I have in view are those words of the disciple whom Jesus loved, and whose writings breathe so much of the spirit of his divine master: "he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." Sublime, affecting character! Love and goodness are then the essence of his will, the motives of all his actions, on which we may with safety repose the dearest interest of our souls! With respect to his divine intelligence, God is light, and in him is no darkness, no ignorance, no error; and in respect to his will, he is pure and infinite love, without any mixture of malevolence.

If we admit this representation of the character and dispositions of God towards us, we cannot suppose hatred to reside in his nature, because to say, that love hates, is a contradiction in terms. The author of the book of wisdom, whoever he was, speaking of the Supreme Being, describes him in a manner too exalted, and at the same time too just, to be overlooked. Speaking of that mercy which he had upon all that they should amend, he says: "For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: for never wouldst thou have made any thing if thou hadst hated it."

Thus if we have any knowledge of God, of his character and dispositions towards us, we must acknowledge that his love is the grand spring of all he has done, or ever will do for us. If we refuse to admit this, St. John tells us, that we have not known him, for God is love, and that this amiable disposition alone, which enables us to see him as he is, can entitle us to any resemblance to him.

Though we have just been contemplating some of the most striking expressions of divine benevolence, yet as it is a truth upon which all religion is founded; so interesting in its

nature, and so repeatedly urged both in the Old and New Testament; I shall not fear to incur the displeasure of my reader, by detaining him a few moments longer, on this delightful subject.

What I would farther propose on this head, is taken from the gospel dispensation which discovers the good will of God to men, his paternal designs, and in a word, their glorious destination to perfect and everlasting felicity; this is clearly expressed, by the apostle, that "the living God, is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe" and "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Such are the declarations of his will; who is called the Saviour of all men, and whose designs, purposes, and resolutions, cannot fail; because infinite wisdom sees the best means to accomplish them; and infinite power, enables him to employ them; thus it is impossible his determinations should be subverted. But had we not this argument drawn from his divine pefections, we should still have the positive assurances of Scripture, that "the counsel of the Lord endureth forever. My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure:" says the Supreme Jehovah by the mouth of his prophet Isaiah. In a word, it is him who worketh all things, after the counsel of his own will. Such is the immutability of his counsel; and constancy and immutability form the first characters of infinite goodness.

The effect of this divine benevolence, the happy consequence that mortals are to derive from it, is *salvation*; perfect and universal salvation; for this is his will, when he calls himself the Saviour of all men. Now salvation is that life, that celestial happiness which the Author of life, and fountain of felicity has prepared for his creatures, and to which he will raise them all. This immortal and unutterable bliss, so worthy of him to bestow, and of us to aspire to, will consist in the perfection of our souls, in knowledge and holiness, and that of our bodies being raised incorruptible and glorious; in the magnificent abode and delightful society of angels and of the spirits of just men made perfect, and above all in our communion with the Son of God, our gracious Redeemer: finally, in our admission to the beatific vision of the Supreme Being, who will unite us to himself, and make us partakers of his nature and happiness; so that *God will be all in all.* And can we form to ourselves the idea of greater happiness, are our natures susceptible of more perfect, more exalted felicity, than that of which God himself will be the immediate, and inexhaustible source?

Such is the short, but delightful sketch, of this salvation, which is to be our inheritance, the possession to which God by our Lord Jesus Christ has appointed us, and which, as it is prepared for us by him, must comprehend all desirable good. Did I say, desirable? It must contain exceeding and abundantly more, than we are able to ask, or think; all the felicity of which our natures are susceptible; and which a Being infinitely powerful can confer upon us; in a word, all that is possible. Which comprehends the second character of infinite goodness, viz.: a disposition to do all possible good.

We come next to consider the duration of infinite goodness, which is throughout all eternity. Thus the salvation he confers upon us, must be an eternal salvation; a life everlasting, an immortality, an eternal inheritance, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. An incorruptible crown; in a word, those things which are not seen, and which are eternal, whereas the things which are seen are temporal. If then our heavenly Father has reserved an eternal salvation for us, in the treasures of his munificence, he will forever bestow upon us, all possible good, because his goodness endureth forever: and thus we are come to the third character in infinite goodness.

The fourth and last, is, that it is a disposition eternally to confer all possible good on all mankind, without exception. The passages above cited are full of the plainest and most positive declarations of this truth, it is the language of revelation in almost every page, that "the Lord is good unto all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works."

Thus I have proved that the doctrine of Scripture with respect to our future destination, evidently demonstrates, that the goodness of God is indeed infinite; as I have distinctly shewn from the declarations of it, *as his will*, that all men should be saved; which necessarily implies all the characters of infinite goodness, and is perfectly equivalent with this proposition, that there is in the Supreme Being, a constant will, to confer all possible good upon all mankind, throughout all eternity. And does not this exactly correspond with the definition of *infinite goodness*, which I gave in the preceding chapter?

Such has the Father of our spirits revealed himself to us, in his word: but he has yet another method of instruction, more sensible, more evident, and more universal, than the most perfect doctrine could ever be; and this is our *experience*: experience, when joined to that revelation which enlightens our reason, places this truth in so striking a light, that it becomes as it were palpable, and is an object of our senses.

Thus when revelation proclaims the promise of eternal life, in which the treasures of divine munificence are displayed; it also appeals to a fact, to the most signal instance of infinite goodness, in the gift, the precious gift, that God has bestowed upon us in his Son, to call and to conduct us to happiness: that our faith being founded on experience, may lead us to place an unshaken confidence in all his assurances of salvation.

Now as this fact is appealed to in proof of the infinite goodness of our Maker, let us examine how it is evidenced by it.

The supreme Creator beholding the beings he had made, and destined to happiness, wan-

dering in the ways of sin, and departing from that celestial life, for the enjoyment of which they were created; appointed his own Son to be the Saviour of the world. And could the Eternal Father bestow on us a more excellent gift, than he "who is the image of his own invisible Godhead, the first-born of every creature: by whom the world was made, his first born, his only begotten, his well beloved Son, in whom he declares himself well pleased, who was crowned with glory and happiness, in the bosom of the Father, before the world was?"

But when he appointed this beloved Son to be the deliverer of the human race; to the accomplishing this end, and the fulfilling of this divine commission; he gave him power over all men, power to raise them from the dead, and to judge them; authority to reign over them, that he might bring them all to God.

But previous to the exercise of this mediatorial authority, it was necessary that he should *become the light of the world;* and not alone instruct us by his precepts, but shew us in his person, what those virtues were, which we were enjoined to practice, in order to fit ourselves to *be partakers of this great salvation.* He was therefore not only appointed to be the teacher, and deliverer; but the *model*, and *guide*, of the human race.

To this end the *Son of God*, became the *son of man*, emptied himself and became like to us, by taking with our mortal nature all its infirmities and miseries; and submitting to death, that by his resurrection, and ascension to heaven, the glorious certainty of our future destination might appear.

Now to accomplish this, it was necessary that the Divine Being should give his well-beloved Son to a sinful world; that he should not spare him, but should deliver him up.

Thus we behold our Saviour, in conformity to the will of his Father, quitting the celestial abode of divine glory, condescending to be born of a virgin, living amongst us in a mean and abject condition, exposed to contradictions, to hatred, and to all the cruel malice of his enemies; becoming a prey to their machinations, abandoned to their barbarous rage, placed in the rank of a criminal, loaded with reproach, and indignity, and condemned to the most bitter sufferings: nailed to an infamous cross, and there expiring in grief and agony. And is it thus, O God of justice! that thou permittest thine innocent, and holy Son to become the victim of a wicked and corrupt world, a world of sinners, of unjust and cruel rebels! O the depth of the riches of the goodness and love of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.

Such is the gift which God has bestowed upon us in his Son, such the striking and ever memorable act by which he has signalized his infinite goodness to us; and what goodness may we not discover, what evidence may we not draw from it? Two reflections certainly merit our attention.

First, Which way soever we turn our thoughts on this astonishing subject, we behold the traces of infinite goodness; and not the traces only, but the most resplendent and convincing marks of this amiable, this adorable attribute, in the great Author of our being. his gift, was that of the most excellent, the most sublime intelligence, and therefore the most tender object of his affection. He gave him in a manner not less surprising, he spared him not, but delivered him up to die upon an ignominious cross: if we next consider on whom he conferred so transcendent a favour, it was on a whole race of men, alienated from him, and enemies in their minds by wicked works. Or if we turn to the purposes for which he gave him, we shall discover, that he was designed to exhibit, even in his death, the most perfect model of all virtue, and that the consequences of that death, were to be our glorious destination to a happy, and eternal life. Need we then doubt that our salvation is *his will*, and our happiness his delight; when he employs such means to secure it? and after this wonderful token of his love, with what confidence may we not depend, that we shall forever remain the happy objects of his infinite compassion, and love; and that he will deny us nothing that can contribute to our everlasting well being? Such is the conclusion which St. Paul derives from this marvellous dispensation: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him, also freely give us all things?"

Thus does experience discover to us the infinite love of our Maker; and how evident soever truths founded on reason may appear, the instruction we receive from experience, brings home to our hearts such strong and lively impressions, that we are unable to resist the conviction.

The most positive declarations, the most immediate promises, from the mouth of God Himself, *that he will neither leave nor forsake us*, may put tranquillity into our minds, because they are the declarations of Him, who is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent; yet even these, were we destitute of all experience of their truth, could never create in our hearts, the intimate conviction, the perfect assurance which only *that* can give.

For could I ever from these declarations, and promises, have inferred, the inestimable gift of such a Saviour? I might indeed have hoped, from the principles already established, that my Almighty Father would refuse me nothing which he saw necessary to my happiness; but who could presume to expect such things, as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, surely they could never enter into the heart of man to conceive?

But when to the express assurances, to the most magnificent promises of divine goodness, we are able to add that evident demonstration which arises from the experience of the infinite goodness of God in the gift of his Son, what strength does it not convey to them?

a flood of light pours in upon the mind; the whole man lays hold on the delightful truth, by every faculty of his soul; he not only knows, comprehends, and believes it; but he sees, contemplates, tastes, and in a word feels, in the inmost recesses of his heart; that his Eternal Creator is a father infinitely kind.

It is thus we may be filled with all the fulness of God. It was this consideration which led St. Paul to express himself with such heartfelt eloquence, and such strength and energy of language. "I am persuaded," says he, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

CHAPTER III.

Consequences deduced from the infinite goodness of God.

After having in the two preceding chapters explained and proved, the *infinite goodness of God*, it should seem that this foundation of the system of his government of moral agents was sufficiently known, and that I might here terminate the first part of this work. But this sublime and delightful proposition, is a truth too interesting to content myself with having demonstrated it; we must stop and contemplate the most affecting object that can ever engage our attention: the Being who made us, and who is goodness itself; the *eternal will*, who is love, and breathes nothing but love! If the Psalmist said it was a good thing, O most High! to shew forth thy loving kindness every morning; how much reason have we to say it is a good thing to contemplate, to meditate, to reflect upon this ineffable goodness? Our minds no sooner employ themselves thus, but our hearts are touched, and penetrated, and we are ready to exclaim, O God of love! *in thy presence is fulness of joy!*

But it is not only the beauty of the subject that detains me: I have another and more imtant reason, which makes it necessary that I should dwell upon it; and this is, *that the infinite goodness of God* is not known, or what amounts to the same, that it is ill known. I say that to know improperly, or not to know, amounts to the same thing. St. John does say, *he that loveth not has improperly known God*, but, he that loveth not, *has not known him.*

And here I perceive that many of my readers will be alarmed at the apparent injustice of the accusation, and ask how this complaint can be made among Christians, when there is not a sect, a single communion amongst them, which does not profess to believe the infinite goodness of God? Is there a divine, of what denomination soever, who does not acknowledge and expressly teach this truth? is there even an individual in Christendom who does not profess it: insomuch that the epithet of a *good God*, is in the mouth of every one? To all this I agree; mankind acknowledge and profess to believe the infinite goodness of God: it is preached, it is taught, and notwithstanding all this, it is not known.

But it is necessary here to explain what I advance, not only to make the propriety of this chapter appear, but of the whole of this treatise. For why write to explain and establish a truth already known to all, and which no one contests?

I say then first, that the goodness of God, is not known to all such, as attribute to him, a will, and actions, absolutely incompatible therewith, and which can only belong to infinite malevolence and cruelty.

Secondly, it is not known to those, who have doubts, difficulties, and objections concerning it.

Thirdly, it is not known to all such, as have not for the Supreme Being, for his providence and for his laws, the sentiments which infinite goodness deserves; for his providence and his laws are no other than his perfect and gracious will.

And when tried by these rules, how many will be found who know thee not, O merciful God! how many labour under the dreadful misfortune of misconceiving thine adorable goodness, through the means of prejudice, ignorance, or passion! Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon them!

Since such is the case, it was necessary to determine the precise idea, and to demonstrate the perfect certainty of this truth, as I have done hitherto; but this is not enough; I therefore devote this chapter to the enumeration of the principal consequences which flow from the infinite goodness of God; which will in the first place entirely refine it from the dross of error, which has corrupted, and even totally destroyed, our ideas of it.

Secondly, reconcile it with every appearance, with every event in the course of nature, with every dispensation of providence, which may seem in contradiction to it.

Thirdly shew, what are the sentiments which the knowledge of the infinite goodness of God infallibly produces in the heart, when the mind is rightly informed, and thoroughly convinced of it.

This chapter will be divided into two sections; the first of which will contain the consequences respecting the theory; and the second, the practical consequences to be derived from it.

SECTION I.

The first consequence resulting from *the infinite goodness of God*, is *its incomprehensibility*, or in other words, the utter impossibility of any finite creature ever comprehending the extent of this attribute, as possessed by the Supreme Being.

And this must appear with the clearest evidence; for as this perfection is constantly em-

ployed in doing all the good, that is possible, we must in order to comprehend it, know all the good which every creature, is, and will ever be, capable of receiving; we must be ignorant of none of the works of our Maker, must know the whole universe as he does, must know God himself; and this is to advance, that our knowledge must be infinite. Thus it is evident that the infinite goodness of God, is incomprehensible by us; because we can never possess infinite knowledge.

Besides, we see that this attribute is connected with his wisdom, and power: thus when we say that his goodness is incomprehensible, it is equal to saying that all the attributes of our Creator are infinite, and that he himself far exceeds the limits of our understanding. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?"

But here some will say, if the goodness of God is incomprehensible to us, because it is infinite, have we not just reason to fear that all researches into it, will be vain, and all our arguments, uncertain conjectures? shall the limited powers of man, his weak, and short-sighted reason, presume to advance any thing on a subject so dark, and impenetrable; and must not all the arguments of his feeble reason be uncertain and rash, if not absolutely false? How then are we to argue on an incomprehensible subject?

Such are the declamations I have often heard, and sometimes even read. For when men will not admit the consequences that follow from the infinite goodness of their Maker, they think to avoid them by taking refuge in its unsearchable nature; and declaim on the darkness, the weakness, and temerity of human reason.

Let us for a moment examine what that faculty is, which we hear so often censured. It is true that it is originally covered with profound darkness; but it is also true, that it is the mean by which we may acquire light, and *that*, in an endless progression. It is true that in its first dawn it is weak and feeble; but it is not less so, that it acquires strength by exercise, and that the more it is exerted, the more vigorous it becomes. This reason, however obscure and feeble in its origin, is nevertheless the grand mark of distinction between us, and the brute creation; it is the faculty by which we are rendered capable of contemplating and resembling in any degree, the infinitely perfect God; in a word, therein can only consist his image stamped upon man. Reason is the excellence, the perfection, the dignity of human nature; and God addresses himself to it, in nature, and in revelation. He, who made us for happiness, determined to raise us from the dreadful wretchedness of ignorance, and sin, to perfection and felicity; and to accomplish this end he gives us the means, of developing, of exercising, of fortifying, and of enlightening it by the knowledge of the truth. Ah! let us then venerate our reason. Let us beware of vilifying and degrading this *candle of the Lord* in which consists the honour, and glory, of our nature. Let us fear to follow our prejudices and passion, since it is they that render us culpable and wretched; and let us remember that we shall never be perfect and happy, till our reason shall have acquired an absolute, and habitual empire, over our sentiments and conduct; that is, till we are truly rational.

I solicit my readers to pardon this digression in favour of human reason, which I considered necessary, since, under the pretext that the goodness of God is incomprehensible, the ignorance and weakness of reason have been exaggerated to such a degree, that some might be tempted to infer, that it was a treacherous and dangerous guide. It was therefore requisite to explain, how far it might be deemed weak and imperfect, without prejudice to the excellence and dignity of this valuable faculty.

Let us now take up the question, How we are to reason on an incomprehensible subject? Now when we say that the Divine Goodness is unsearchable, we do not mean that the subject is so dark, and impenetrable, that we can form no ideas of it; that we cannot comprehend what goodness is; and that we do not perceive with the clearest evidence, that the Supreme Being is infinitely good. This would be a very false and absurd conclusion, and what the two preceding chapters are intended to overthrow; we mean therefore to express, that in the extent of Divine Goodness, there is, and will ever remain, infinitely more than we can comprehend; and thus, that the sublimest ideas we can form, will continue at an infinite distance from the reality of that attribute in our Maker. We mean also to signify, that we can never ascribe more goodness to God than he possesses, or exceed its bounds in our expectations of happiness from it. We cannot indeed determine the time, and manner, in which Infinite Wisdom may see fit to dispense his blessings; because our knowledge is finite; but we may with certainty affirm with the apostle, that "he is able to do exceedingly and abundantly more for us, than we can ask or think."

Lastly, when we say that the infinite goodness of God is incomprehensible, we mean that it is *inexhaustible* with respect to us, and that our progress in the knowledge of it will last forever; for in the riches of his love consist those *rivers of pleasure, of which he will cause us to drink*. This is the true and interesting signification of the term, and first consequence *that the infinite goodness of God is incomprehensible.*

The second, contains *the absolute impossibility of there being any thing in the supreme mind contrary to his infinite goodness.* This truth is so apparent, that many of my readers may call it a self evident proposition; as if I were to say, *that it is impossible for a thing to be, and not to be at the same time.* And yet evident as it certainly is, its discussion is both

important and necessary, and will take up a considerable portion of this chapter. For,

Though mankind admit the infinite goodness of God, they nevertheless obstinately persist in attributing to him designs and actions, absolutely incompatible with its very nature; and which can only belong to infinite cruelty. To give colour to this, it was necessary to seek in God certain qualities, and attributes, which might serve as a foundation for such a will, and for such actions. Thus they have laid hold on his *incomprehensibility*, which they apply to his goodness in such a manner as forbids any conclusions to be drawn without timerity. But I have already combated this sophistical reasoning. They have also opposed to the goodness of God, *his liberty*, by which he is free to do or not to do good; that is, free to be or not to be good. They have found *his holiness*, by which he holds the wicked in such abomination, that instead of being the objects of his goodness and love, they are the unhappy victims of his displeasure and hatred. They have discovered *the justice of God*, that *punitive* justice, as they call it, which has such a decided superiority over his goodness, though both are infinite, that it obliges him to inflict on the wicked a punishment infinite in duration. They have defined the *authority of God* to be, an absolute right in him to dispose of his creatures at his pleasure, without any regard to their happiness, and consequently without consulting his goodness. *His majesty* also, by which they have determined the minutest sin to deserve infinite punishment; because committed against infinite majesty. They have found *his glory*, to be the supreme end for which all things were created, and which he will display in the infinite misery of the reprobate in direct opposition to his infinite goodness.

Consider how many things have been found in God, which are contrary to his goodness, since they prevent its exertion! how many formidable barriers are raised to stop the current of divine benignity in its eternal course! May we not with reason apprehend lest the sentiments arising from its influence upon our hearts should entirely escape us? But those who have perused the preceding chapter, have already seen on what firm foundations divine benevolence stands. I proceed therefore to shew, with all imaginable evidence, *that it is absolutely impossible that there should exist any thing in God, contrary to his infinite goodness.*

How then! may it be said, will you, in order to vindicate the goodness of God, assert, that He is neither *free*, nor *holy*, nor *just*, that He possesses neither *authority*, nor *majesty*, nor *glory?*

On the contrary, I shall prove that these are so many divine attributes, which he possesses in an infinitely perfect measure, because he is infinitely good: and thus, that his other perfections, instead of opposing, agree and conspire eternally to shed happiness and perfection throughout the universe.

But before I examine these perfections separately, it will be proper just to cast an eye back upon our second consequence, which asserts, *the impossibility of there being in God any thing in contradiction to his infinite goodness*, and to discover why this is impossible?

Because it is impossible, that the same being can be infinitely good, and infinitely evil. For as all the attributes of the Deity are infinite, that which is opposed to good, being evil, must be infinite evil; and this surely is as impossible, as it is horrid and blasphemous.

Now the grand use, the consequence of this important truth, is the assurance it gives me, that whatever aspect present appearances may wear, nothing can exist in God contrary to his goodness. Subtle and abstract metaphysical questions, on the liberty, the holiness, the justice, the authority, the majesty, and glory of God, may embarrass me for a while; but they will never shake this capital, this fundamental truth; and I shall answer them as the blind man did the Pharisees concerning Jesus, when they said, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, whether he be a sinner or not, I know not, one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

But let us see what these perfections are, that are supposed to differ from goodness. As creator and governor of the world, the Deity can exert but three perfections, knowledge, goodness, and power; by his infinite wisdom he can always distinguish what is best to be done: his infinite goodness will ever lead him to prefer the greatest good; and his power will enable him to execute his will: from whence it follows that the rest of his perfections, though they bear different names, can only be branches of some one of these, or the result of their diverse combinations; and that in either of these cases there can be nothing in God averse to his infinite goodness.

And first, let us consider *Divine liberty*, which is a negative perfection, consisting *in a perfect exemption from all contraint, whether external or internal.* In consequence of this liberty, God may be said to do *whatsoever he wills*, and he wills whatever is best: thus being exempt from all constraint from internal or external causes, he is independent, and his actions are the result of his choice: many are the declarations of scripture expressive of this divine liberty. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth. My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure, saith the Lord. He executeth all things after the counsel of his own will, for who hath resisted his will?

But secondly, if such is the perfect liberty of God, how can it ever stand opposed to his goodness? alas! only by supposing it, what it is not, nor ever can be. For under pretence of exalting the liberty of God, he is supposed free to determine for, or against, in the affirmative, or the negative; independent of the motives which his infinite wisdom may present; and free to will, or not to will, or even—

shall I venture to complete this horrid proposition? or even to *will* with equal indifference *good* or evil. And is this then the infinite liberty of our Creator? would it in your estimation be an amiable, and glorious perfection, equally to *will* the happiness or misery of his creatures; indiscriminitely to love, or hate them; and to decide indifferently for good or evil? and is it possible that prejudice can so far blind many whose minds are in other respects intelligent, and upright? But alas! such is its baneful influence! The necessity of defending a doctrine which they venerate, however horrid, because they believe it revealed in the word of God; this necessity leads men to hold a language the sense of which is revolting; contrary to the natural dictates of their hearts; and which they have in a thousand instances contradicted, when they only meant to express the simple and natural ideas, of the adorable goodness of the Lord.

But let us turn from this dreadful phantom, raised by ignorance and prejudice, and consider the liberty of the Divine will, as the determinations of design, and choice, from motives worthy of him; and which his infinite wisdom can never be at a loss to suggest. Thence his infinite goodness must remain unalterably, and immutably the same throughout endless ages. His essence is goodness and love, he cannot act contrary to his nature, *or deny himself*.

Let us reject with horror all such erroneous opinions of Divine liberty, as destroy every idea of his goodness; and let us resolve it into that absolute prerogative, which God alone can possess, of executing every purpose of his will without constraint from external, or internal causes. This is perfect, and infinite liberty; a liberty, which far from opposing goodness, will ensure its eternal exercise.

The holiness of God, far from being averse to his goodness, is itself a capital branch resulting from it.

The word *holiness* is made use of in scripture, to express *the moral perfection* of an intelligent nature; and all will allow that excellence to consist in the *perfection of the will*. Thus is the Supreme Being called *thrice holy*, because his will is sovereignly good and perfect. Now this perfect holiness of God, evidently results from his perfect goodness already established. I shall not therefore go over these proofs again, but conclude that if holiness consists in the perfection of the will, the Supreme Being must be most holy, because he is infinitely good.

Such is the holiness of God with respect to himself: view it in relation to his creatures; it consists in a disposition invariably to will their moral perfection, or in other words, to desire the greatest perfections of our wills.

In conformity to this, he commands us to love him with all our hearts, who is supremely perfect; and to love our neighbour as ourselves; to the end that our wills may partake of that perfection, which resides invariably in his. This is the summary of all the divine laws, which he requires us to obey, because he wills our utmost perfection. Agreeable to this he declares, that his will is our sanctification. He commands us to tend towards perfection, to be pure, as he is pure; holy as he is holy; perfect, as he is perfect; merciful, as he is merciful; in a word, to be imitators of him as dear children.

From this disposition in the Deity, to advance the moral perfection of his creatures, must result his hatred to moral evil; sin, is that will in us, which is in opposition to the law, and contrary to the love of God, and our neighbour; it is the imperfection, the depravity, the wickedness of our wills. As surely then as God by his holiness desires the perfection of our wills, so surely must he condemn and detest in us the impurity of vice; he hates it, with a perfect hatred, he has it in abomination, he is its implacable enemy, and he will pursue and combat it, as long as we are infected by it. He declares that nothing unclean shall enter into his holy city; that without holiness no one shall see the Lord; that he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and that there is no peace to the wicked.

Such is the nature of Divine holiness as it relates to us. The psalmist had the same idea, when he said "thou Lord lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity. Thence the frequent exhortations in scripture to hate and fly from evil, to love and to do good. Thus far all mankind are agreed, and no one will deny this to be a just idea of the holiness of the Deity.

But here begins the distinction. Those who oppose holiness to goodness, by their definition make it so formidable an obstacle, that, infinite as that goodness is, it becomes checked and conquered. For under pretext that the holiness of God consists in an infinite hatred of sin, they draw this horrid conclusion, that he hates the obstinate and wicked offender, with an infinite and implacable hatred; such a hatred as will by its effects consign them over to infinite and eternal misery.

How injurious to the holiness of the Almighty Being is an idea, so contrary to goodness, which converts holiness into cruelty.

But if the object is painful, it is happy to reflect with what ease it may be removed, to give place to that more just and comforting idea, that the infinite and implacable hatred of God to sin, proceeds from his infinite love of the sinner. Thus, he is infinitely holy, because infinitely good; and thus is his holiness a branch of his divine and infinite goodness.

The opinion I am about to combat, that God hates the wicked, is as universal, as it is pernicious, and revolting. We are naturally inclined to the belief in which we are educated, and one of the first ideas the infant mind receives is that of the eternal sufferings which divine vengeance will inflict on the wicked. When our understandings, though naturally just and consistent, have once admitted this proposition as an indisputable truth, it is natural that we should see in the Supreme Being an infinite hatred to the

sinner, because it is a hatred forever implacable. We next proceed to search for the reason on which this implacable hatred is founded, and conclude it must arise from the infinite holiness of our Maker. And no sooner do we admit this strange proposition than it leads us imperceptibly to associate the most opposite and most incompatible ideas, and thus we reason: It is true that God is infinitely good, but it is not less true, that he is infinitely holy, and thence arises that hatred and detestation of sinners which will end in his inflicting eternal torments upon them. Thus does the introduction of one error corrupt and pervert the most sublime truths, and place the adorable perfections of the Deity in opposition with each other, by asserting that a Being supremely good, will nevertheless deal with his offending creatures, as if he were infinitely cruel. Behold the deplorable effects of prejudice! but above all see whither it leads: *how deep calleth unto deep*, and how one error draws after it a multitude of others. Our reason no sooner deviates from the right way, by the admission of a false principle, then every step it takes leads farther *from the knowledge of the truth.*

But farther. Those who make the holiness of God to consist in his hatred of the sinner, have another method of establishing their theory. They produce from scripture many passages in proof of it; thus the Psalmist says, "Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity, the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man;" and Jehovah speaking by the mouth of Moses declares, if the Israelites are disobedient *his soul would abhor them.* And again by the prophet Jeremiah, "My heritage crieth out against me, therefore have I hated it."

As these quotations are taken from scripture, they will afford us a very useful and interesting discussion, on what *the divine oracles relate*, respecting the *sentiments of God towards sinners:* and this will greatly contribute to confirm what I have already advanced on the subject of infinite holiness, and farther serve as an illustrious example of that great truth contained in my preliminary discourse, *that God in his word addresses himself to our reason.*

Since scripture declares, *that God hates the wicked*, there must be a sense in which it can be asserted with truth, but that sense must also perfectly agree with his infinite love for them, or the Divine word would be in contradiction with itself, and with reason, and thereby lose the evidence of its authenticity, as the word of God. I shall therefore proceed to shew with all imaginable evidence, and to prove from scripture, that there is one sense in which he may be said to hate sinners, though there is another in which it is true that he loves them infinitely, or even, that it is true in one sense, that God has an infinite hatred to the wicked, because in another sense he loves them infinitely.

In scripture, as well as in the use of familiar language, the terms *love* and *hate*, have two different meanings annexed to them; by one of these meanings, which must always relate to objects and never to things, to love, or to hate any one, signifies sincerely to desire or to will their *happiness*, or *misery*. In this sense it is not necessary in order to our being beloved, that we should be in a state of actual perfection; but alone, that we should be capable of a progress towards it; for then our natures are at least amiable. In this sense it is that the Supreme Being loves the whole race of men without any exception, or difference. He desires eternally and invariably their greatest good, and in this sense *hateth nothing that he hath made*, because he can never will, the final and eternal misery of any creature. But if the reader is not convinced of this, let him turn to the preceding chapter, where I have demonstrated the infinity of Divine goodness.

But the terms *love* and *hate*, have yet another sense applied to them, which relates indifferently to persons and things, and in this sense to love any one, is to take pleasure in him as in an object that is amiable and agreeable, in whose society and intercourse we take delight. To hate also in this sense, is to be displeased with the object, to regard it as odious, and to feel in its society nothing but aversion and disgust. In this sense also it may justly be said of the Supreme Being, that he loves the righteous, and hates the wicked. He beholds in the upright, that attachment to virtue, that sincere and universal conformity of their wills to his, which is so pleasing in his sight; and in consequence of this virtue, this sincerity, this submission, he loves them with complacence and delight. On the contrary he beholds in their vicious courses, their constant, and obstinate opposition to his will, their propensity to moral disorder, and that resistance to his government which is so odious in his sight, and hates them with a hatred of condemnation and aversion. Thus he delights in conferring the tokens of his favour and approbation on the one; while the other will experience the effects of his displeasure in his rigour, and severity. "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

After the exposition here given of the two different senses applied to the terms *love* and *hate*, it will appear very possible, that the same individual may be an object of love in the first sense, and of hatred in the second. As a wise and good parent laments over the irregularities of a disobedient son, yet loves him tenderly, inasmuch as he ardently desires his happiness; but the more tenderly he loves him in this sense, the more will he hate and detest the odious state in which his disorder and vice has placed him. Thus it is with our heavenly Father. He loves the transgressor, inasmuch as he sincerely desires his greatest happiness; but he hates him in that horrid state where his sins have placed him.

As the second meaning of the term *hate* is equally applicable to persons or things; the hatred of God for sinners is exactly similar to his hatred of sin, and thus the author of the book of Wisdom declares, that "the ungodly and his ungodliness, are both alike hateful unto God;" for the expression *hate* being here equally applied to the sinner and the sin, cannot be understood in the first sense, which can only relate to persons, and never to things. Besides, could the same author if he had meant by hatred, the desire of misery to the object, have declared in those beautiful words already quoted, and which I repeat with so much pleasure, that "the Lord loveth all the things that are, and abhorreth nothing which he hath made, for never would he have made any thing, if he had hated it."

It is therefore in the second sense, that the word *hate* is to be understood, in the three passages above cited. But to make it appear yet more evident, let us examine more closely the declaration of the psalmist, where we shall see this second sense clearly pointed out by the verse preceding that, in which the hatred of God for the wicked is expressed. "For thou art not a God, that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee: the foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all the workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak lies: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man."

With respect to one of those passages, where the hatred of God is declared against the rebellious Israelites, I request my reader to peruse the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus whence it is taken, from the fourteenth verse to the end; as it is singularly expressive *of the ways of God towards sinners*, and in it will be found those two sublime and eternal truths, expressed in the most lively and striking manner: the first, that God is the implacable enemy of sin, and that he pursues and combats it to the utmost in the sinner; which is declared most forcibly from the fourteenth to the thirty-eighth verse. The second, not less evident in the seven following verses is, that when the severities of the Almighty have produced their effect, by conquering the obstinacy, and resistance of the wicked; when sinners repent, and confess their iniquity, "that their hearts are humbled, and that they accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then the Lord remembers them, will not cast them away, neither abhors them to destroy them utterly, and to break his covenant with them, but will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors;" that is, receive them into favour, *and return to bless them*. The hatred therefore of God for the sinner is such as corrects and brings them back to himself, sometimes *and if need be* by the most terrible, but at the same time the most salutary chastisements.

It is no small thing no doubt to have proved, that what scripture says of the hatred of God for sinners, relates only to the displeasure which their state of rebellion excites: but I will go farther, and prove from scripture also, that the Supreme Father of mankind wills the eternal happiness of the wicked. and thus, in the first sense, applied to the term *love*, loves them infinitely.

Let us first consider those merciful declarations which relate to the salvation of all men, consequently of that of the sinner. If God wills that all men should be saved, it manifestly includes the sinner; and is not this to love them infinitely? and St. Peter assures us that "he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." But above all let us attend to the voice of God himself, who declares with a solemn oath, "as I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ways and live." How sublime and affecting, how infinitely precious and valuable are these truly divine words, of the Father of Mercies! In them I find every thing that is necessary for me to know respecting my Maker, and myself; I behold in them the perfect resemblance of the living God, and read the anticipated history of a sinful world. It is the Creator, the Eternal Father of men, he *who created their souls*, who makes the declaration, and ratifies it with his oath, "as I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," *&c.* He desires not their death, but wills their life and happiness! and what stronger language could he have employed to assure us, that he did not hate, but that he loved the sinner? He declares it with the solemnity of an oath, "and because he could swear by no greater he swares by himself."

But let us also remark the way in which he desires the life of the wicked; it is by their conversion, they must turn to him and live. He wills their happiness, but as that is impossible while they remain sinners, he will have them cease to be such, and become penitent, and obedient children. Evident proof this, that the love of God to the sinner is equal to his hatred of sin, and that *his detestation of sin, arises from his love to the sinner*. Or in other words that *he is holy, because he is good*.

But strong as these promises are, the Being *who is love*, foreseeing how incapable finite goodness would be of comprehending that which is infinite *and passes knowledge*, has given to our *experience* the most sensible manifestation of his love, the most transcendent display of his mercy, in the gift of his only and well beloved Son. Certainly if mankind had continued just and holy, this work of redemption had not been necessary: it is therefore in favour of sinners, and of sinners alone, that this effort of love, this miracle of mercy was wrought, as our Saviour expressly declares; "they that are whole need not a physician but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. I came to seek, and to save that which was lost." And St. Paul confirms this in a very remarkable manner, as if combating the error I am seeking to destroy, viz.:

"that the hatred of God for sinners consists in his willing their infinite misery: It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

How great then must be the love of God to poor wretched, offending creatures! how sincerely must he desire to save them from the dreadful misery of sin, and to raise them to perfection and happiness, since to accomplish it, he sent his own Son, and exposed him to an infamous and cruel death! How can it be possible that after such signal experience of his infinite compassion for sinners, any should be found amongst those *who are called by the name of Christ*, and who glory in his death as the badge of their religious profession, that among such nevertheless should be found, those who maintain the infinite, and implacable hatred of God to the sinner, and in consequence of it, their final and irrevocable misery? how difficult is it O my God, for thine adorable goodness to penetrate into hearts covered with thick darkness of prejudice and error!

But if the gift of the Son of God, is an everlasting monument of his love for sinners; it is not less a mark of his infinite, and eternal hatred of sin. How clearly is this exemplified in the work of redemption! how odious, how insupportable in his sight must that sin appear which he cannot behold in us, but which as long as we continue in it, must drive us from his presence, and exclude us from all communion with him; when to deliver us from it, to cleanse, and purify us, he has employed a method so extraordinary, and made to astonishing a sacrifice!

Let us then conclude from scripture, as we have already done from reason, that the Supreme Being has an infinite hatred to sin, founded on his infinite love of the sinner; or that he is infinitely good, and that his holiness far from being in contradiction to his goodness, is a capital and essential branch of it.

I come next to consider the infinite justice of God, which far from opposing is also a branch, an awful, but nevertheless an important branch, of infinite goodness.

The general definition of divine justice, *that it is goodness, directed by wisdom*, however true upon the whole, seems to have, in quality of a definition, the defect of being too general, and not determining with precision, in what the particular character of divine justice consists; or the reasons why the goodness of God is sometimes called justice; every act of divine justice is an act of his goodness directed by his wisdom; yet every act of goodness thus directed cannot be called an act of justice. As for example, the gift that God made of his Son to a sinful world, cannot with propriety be called an act of justice, though it is the highest instance of goodness and wisdom.

I therefore declare in favour of another received definition of divine justice, because it expresses with greater precision the ideas usually attached to the term. That the infinite justice of God, consists in his constant and immutable will, to dispense to every one that, which best corresponds with his moral state. The justice of one man towards another is the constant and habitual will, of rendering to every one that which is his due; but as this term is wholly improper when speaking of an independent Being, we substitute another, and as a man is called *just* who gives to every one his due, so is the Divine Being called *just*, because he dispenses invariably to every one, that, which best agrees with his moral state; and it is easy to comprehend that such justice, is founded on the infinite wisdom, and goodness, of our Maker.

According to this definition, infinite justice adapts with the most perfect and minute detail, the respective suitableness of his dealings to our moral state, and consequently to our wants, throughout the whole of our existence.

But in order to our forming any idea of this diversity; the constant, and exact exertion of which, forms the essence of Divine justice, we must consider here, the moral state of men and the different state of their wills; which require a diversity of dispensations, on the part of God.

If mankind constantly adhered to the laws of virtue, and holiness, and thus continued in a state of moral rectitude; this diversity of dispensations would not take place, and there would be no room for the exercise of what is properly called justice. All the dealings of God with respect to man, would then be the dispensations of pure and infinite goodness, without the interference of a single chastisement, and such will be the happy economy under which *the just made perfect* shall live forever, in the mansions of celestial glory, "when all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Then, will Almighty goodness never more appear arrayed in the terrors of justice; but the smiles of benignity, the manifestations of favour, and blessing, will be continually displayed; and nothing ever reach our souls, but the most grateful and delightful sensations; for every dispensation will be the messenger of happiness.

But how remote are we in our present state from this moral perfection; no sooner do our understandings admit the first rays of that light, which is given us to direct our wills to the Supreme good, but we feel irregular passions to combat, *and fleshly lusts which war against the soul*. Divine justice therefore, or if you will, divine goodness directed by wisdom; has seen proper to place us here in a mortal state, where, while we enjoy a multitude of blessings, we are at the same time exposed to a diversity of afflictions, which in one way or other accompany us all to the grave. Here we begin to perceive the exercise of that eternal justice which observes so minutely the suitableness of its dispensations, and adapts them so exactly to the necessities

of his creatures. He does not deal with sinful and imperfect man, as with man delivered from sin and arrived at perfection. This kind and good parent wills no doubt, that his creatures should enjoy as much happiness even here, as their state will admit; as much as is compatible with the supreme felicity to which he calls them, and therefore places them in a world furnished with an ample store of blessings, *and gives them all things richly to enjoy*. But lest *these* very blessings, should by means of their irregular passions, corrupt and enslave them, he has decreed that they should neither be solid, nor lasting, but *that the fashion of the world should pass* away, and has placed them in it *as strangers and pilgrims for a little while*, that *they may use the world, as not abusing it*, and aspire to more solid and durable good. Thus does divine justice exercise itself here below, towards a race of sinful and imperfect beings. It places us all in a state of trial, as in a school where we are to acquire the first rudiments of happiness; this situation is universally suitable to all men, without distinction whether of good or bad, and in this sense it is, "that the righteous scarcely are saved, and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God."

But while mankind succeed each other in this sublunary school of happiness, some listening to the voice of conscience, and reason, contract the habits, and follow the divine laws of virtue and holiness; while others, led away by objects of sense and passion, contract habits of vice and disorder, in opposition to the divine laws; and thence some are good, and others are evil; while in the dealings of divine justice towards each, is manifested the perfect rectitude of the Supreme Governor of the universe, *who is righteous in all his ways*. To his holy and perfect laws, he has attached the just and immutable sanction of rewards and punishments; of glorious and magnificent rewards to the faithful, and obedient observer of them; and of severe and terrible chastisements, to the obstinate violater of his commands. It is true that these rewards and punishments do not take place always in this world; because it would interfere with the general good, and with that state of probation, which requires from divine justice many exceptions adapted to it. In a world where the righteous and wicked are interspersed, and where good and evil are blended, an exact retribution of either would be impracticable. But those exceptions, or rather those delays, do not make void the sanction of those laws which are immutable; for God has himself announced in the life to come, a great day of retribution, which may well be termed the day of divine justice. In that day the righteous, that is, those who have *wrought out their salvation*, having no farther need of trial, shall be separated from the wicked; while almighty justice executes on the one, and on the other, that immutable sanction of rewards and punishments, due to their respective conduct.

The precise and determinate idea of infinite justice is then, that invariable will, by which a total difference will be made between the virtuous and the wicked, the former most gloriously rewarded, and the latter severely punished.

If the extreme importance of the subject I am upon, did not require from me, all the precision of which I am capable, I might forbear enlarging on the present idea of divine justice, by quotations from scripture; because in itself sufficiently simple and natural; and as all who are conversant with holy writ, know, that it is there repeatedly expressed. Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, concur in the same sentiment. Abraham when pleading with the Almighty in favour of the inhabitants of Sodom, in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, makes this idea of Divine justice the foundation of his argument. And in the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel, the Supreme Being condescends, in the most explicit and instructive manner, to explain the method of his dealings with his creatures; where we shall find this maxim exemplified, "that the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

But why do I cite particular passages in proof of the justice of God, when the whole history of the Old Testament contains nothing else? Such is the relation of the universal deluge, where a race of wicked men were extirminated from the earth, *but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord*. The destruction of Sodom, from which Lot was preserved. And lastly, the whole history of the Israelites, the alternatives of benedictions, and threatenings, of prosperity, and adversity, which followed them, according as they were obedient, or rebellious to their divine law-giver. The New Testament also abounds with promises and menaces; magnificent promises to the righteous, and dreadful threatenings to the impenitent. I might appeal to the whole gospel dispensation, which opens to our view that future economy that awaits us all, and unveils that awful, but infinitely interesting scene of universal judgment, which shall succeed the resurrection. St. Paul tells the Athenians, *that in that day God will judge the world in righteousness*, that is as he expresses it elsewhere, "will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality; eternal life: but to those who obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish."

Having hitherto explained and confirmed from scripture, the definition of divine justice to be the constant and immutable will of the Supreme Being, to dispense to every one, that which is best adapted to his moral state; the result of all I have said, is, that this infinite justice of God consists in his invariably recompensing the good, and severely punishing the wicked.

It now remains to shew that such justice, far from opposing the goodness of the Al-

mighty, is in itself a branch of that goodness, since it is goodness that abundantly rewards the righteous, and severely punishes the wicked.

With respect to rewards, the truth is sufficiently evident not to need a discussion. The supreme judge beholding the virtuous in that state of habitual holiness, which is requisite to fit them for happiness; dispenses to them that felicity which is suitable to their state, according to the extent of their capacities, and of his infinite love towards them. With relation to them therefore his justice is pure uninterrupted goodness.

But is it goodness also that will inflict on the disobedient the dreadful punishments of a future existence? Is that severity of an offended God, to which scripture gives the terrible appellations of *indignation*, *wrath*, and *fury*, to be ranked in the class of goodness? Yes, I scruple not to affirm, because I can demonstrate it with the clearest evidence. The Supreme Being, never arrays himself in the terrors of his majesty, never punishes his offending creatures, but infinite goodness leads him to it; that goodness which I have already defined *to be his constant will to confer happiness, nothing but real good*; whatever form it may wear; *and even all possible good.* It is this which assuming the name of *justice* will execute on the wicked those terrible denunciations which the gospel contains; as I have undertaken to prove and shall shortly fully explain.

But alas! how far is this from the generally received idea of punitive justice among Christians; who instead of considering it as a branch of goodness, place it in direct opposition; and even represent this attribute as most hostile to divine benignity; since nothing appears at first sight more contrary to goodness, than that extreme severity which God will inflict on the wicked. This justice is therefore described, as stopping forever the course of divine goodness, which exists no more for the sinner; on whom Almighty justice has nothing to confer throughout eternal ages, but the most horrible and affrighting torments. Where is the mind sufficiently courageous to realize this shocking idea? to me even the task of refuting it is painful!

The advocates for this system are sufficiently ready to admit, that *in this life*, the severities of God proceed from his goodness, and that *he chastises us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* But no sooner does the question relate *to a future life*, than the whole is changed; and according to their representation, the nature of God, and of man, must have undergone a total revolution. Repentance will be no more; either it will be impossible for the wicked ever to repent; or if they do, it will avail them nothing with an implacable judge, who has no mercy for them, *but has forgotten to be gracious.* He will no longer, as in this life, punish them for their correction, but for the sole end of rendering them miserable. His goodness till then universal, will become limited; and will have no other object for its exertion, but the righteous; and while they experience the abundance of his love, the treasures of wrath, the severities of avenging inexorable justice, will be showered down in unutterable anguish, and in never ending duration on the head of the unhappy sinner.

But whence this strange, this alarming subversion in the nature of things? I might add, whence this total change in the immutable nature of God himself! Ye souls, where candour and uprightness dwell, for to such I address myself particularly; will you believe that all this proceeds from *a single word* ill understood; a word, which is universally acknowledged to admit of two meanings in scripture; and which in the precent application, may be understood in two ways, one *entirely rational*, the other as *entirely irrational and absurd?* This formidable word which has made such havoc in the minds of men, is the appellation of *eternal* given to the sufferings of a future state. Now though it is evident that God in his written word, as well as in his works, appeals to our reason, and that the sense in which this term is generally understood, is as revolting to reason, as it is repugnant to the nature of God, and of things; mankind obstinately persist to understand it, in the absolute sense, *of an infinite and never ending duration;* and by a necessary consequence are compelled to attribute to the Divine Being, under the name of justice, a disposition absolutely destructive of infinite goodness. They do not indeed venture to assert, that any thing like cruelty can reside in his perfect and adorable nature: on the contrary, they continue to affirm, however contradictory to their hypothesis, that the Supreme Being is infinitely good, but nevertheless maintain that he will inflict, on a very considerable number of his creatures, the most aggravated torments, throughout all eternity.

I lament the strange and deplorable necessity which compels me to refute this shocking idea of divine justice; and that after having so clearly demonstrated *that the Deity is infinitely good*, I must now prove that *he cannot be infinitely cruel.*

I shall not here examine why the word *eternal* is used to express future sufferings, because it is possible I may treat of that hereafter. But I shall lay down as a principle which no one contests, that the word *eternal* is made use of in scripture sometimes to signify an *infinite*, sometimes a *finite* duration. This will enable me to rectify a capital mistake incident to those who argue on this subject, which is determining their ideas of the justice of God, by the duration of sufferings, which they suppose infinite. Though this error is important, it is nevertheless natural to men, who find this doctrine established in the church in which they are born; and who receive it by instruction at an age when their minds are incapable of discerning the absolute impossibility of its truth. Accustomed to consider this doctrine as a truth founded on revelation, and therefore incontestable; they

argue from the eternal sufferings of a life to come, that divine justice requires such punishment; and thus the very nature of that attribute becomes perverted. Now this is evidently a capital mistake, for since the word *eternal* is susceptible of two meanings, as no one will deny, how can we judge of the justice of God by an equivocal term? ought we not on the contrary to determine the sense of an ambiguous word by the fixed and invariable idea we have of his justice? and not take it for granted that this word applied to future sufferings implies an infinite duration; and therefore that in the divine nature, however excellent, is included, an attribute entirely contrary to goodness; which is as manifest a contradiction, as to advance, that the Supreme Being is at once infinitely good, and infinitely cruel? Rather let us argue, that the deity being infinitely just, will inflict on the wicked, just and equitable punishments: punishments exactly proportioned, both in degree, and duration, to the nature and extent of their crimes; which is to say, in other words, that he will treat them in a manner suitable to their moral state; which is agreeable to the natural and eternal ideas of divine justice.

If then it is by the justice of God we are to determine the duration of sufferings to be finite, or infinite; let us endeavour to know why, and for what end, divine justice will punish the wicked in a future state. If we consult that idea of divine justice, which ought always to serve us as a guide, the answer will be easy. For, the justice of God being with respect to the wicked, his constant will to dispense to them what best suits their moral state, it is evident he will punish them in a future existence, because such punishment is best adapted to their moral depravity. The question is next reduced to this, Why the future sufferings that God will inflict on the wicked are suitable to their moral state! The answer to this is so simple that it would naturally present itself to an unprejudiced mind, for the moral condition of a sinner is so contrary to nature, so hurtful and odious, so miserable and detestable; that the Divine Being, who, from the purity and perfection of his nature, sees such a state in all its deformity, cannot, nor will not suffer him to remain in it, but will inflict sufferings on the wicked hereafter, as a necessary mean whereby to disengage them from sin, and render them virtuous; in a word, to correct and convert them, and thus the sufferings of another world, are real chastisements. Such is the sublime and magnificent proposition, I am about to demonstrate from reason and scripture; and from thence will result, with equal evidence, what I have established already, that the infinite justice of God, far from being an implacable severity towards the wicked, in contradiction with his infinite goodness, is, in itself, a branch awful and respectable indeed, but nevertheless, a precious and interesting branch, of infinite goodness.

The proposition I am going to establish, maintains, that God will punish the wicked in a future state, for their conversion: so that their sufferings will be real chastisements.

And here, the deep-rooted, and universal prejudices I encounter, oblige me to enter into a much more minute detail, and collect a greater variety of proofs, in order to carry conviction into the mind, than would otherwise be necessary; that by some one of these, I may convince understandings, which, though prepossessed, yet retain upright and honest hearts.

The first proof I shall bring in favour of this truth, and which, if admitted, were singly sufficient; is the infinite love of God for the sinner, by which he wills their conversion, and their life; and by which it is impossible that he should ever inflict any suffering on them, but with a view to their conversion and happiness. In treating of the holiness of the divine nature, I have proved the infinite love of God for the sinner, and that from this love, arises his implacable hatred to sin, as an insurmountable obstacle in the way of their happiness.

Thus the sufferings he inflicts on them, whether in this, or in a future world, are designed as remedies and cures for that dreadful infection of the soul. It is an eternal truth, founded on the very nature of God, which is love; that he chastises all the sons of men, the comparatively just, and unjust, "for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness."

Let us not say, in order to evade the force of this argument, that the love which God has for the wicked in this life, will, in the next, be converted into hatred; as indeed it must be, if it could lead him to inflict eternal torments upon them. And is there then a time when divine love can be changed into hatred, when God himself can alter, and this period, shall it be the universal judgment? Just heavens! As well might we presume to affirm, that there is a period when he shall cease to be; for the one is as possible as the other. No, the love of God will never change, because it cannot; for his love, like all his attributes, is infinite, immutable, and eternal. If there ever was a moment, a single instant, when he loved the sinner; if he loved him when he created him, when he protested with an oath, that he desired his conversion and his life; if he loved him, when for his sake, he spared not his own son, he will love him with the same love throughout infinite ages, and as soon might he cease to exist, as cease to love.

With frail and mortal man, this transition from love to hatred, is not only very possible, but, alas! very frequent; the object that appears amiable one day, may on the morrow excite aversion and disgust, and but too often hatred. But how can any thing like this take place in the omniscient Creator of men, to whom all his works are known from the beginning? Were the wicked culpable at the instant when they were created? If then,

their Maker produced them by an effect of his love, that love was infinite, and it is impossible that futurity should ever discover any thing relative to them, which he did not perfectly know at the moment of their creation; it is then impossible that any thing should change his love into hatred. When his almighty fiat called them into existence, his glance pervaded every scene through which they were to pass: He knew the long resistance they would oppose to his offers of mercy and grace, he knew the obduracy into which long habits of sin would bring them: but *God who is greater than our hearts* knew also by what *treasures of wrath*, by what severities of justice, he should at length overcome this obdurate resistance: by what powerful, but nevertheless salutary means, he should take away the stony heart, and give us a heart of flesh; in a word he knew how to work in us, to will and to do of his good pleasure; and therefore his love determined to confer existence on creatures, whose moral state could, in the course of time, be made as perfect and amiable as was their natural state, at the moment of their creation. Let us then conclude that the dispositions of Almighty goodness can never change with respect to us; but that however severe the punishments of a future world may be, they are designed for our conversion, and are real corrections.

I draw my second proof of this truth, from those general rules which scripture constantly attributes to God, in the dispensation of sufferings; these are three in number. The first informs us when, and on what occasions, he will punish the wicked; the second, how much, or to what degree; the third, when this punishment will cease, and his favour be restored to them; the result of which will shew, that the Supreme Being never chastises but with a view to correct, and that the future punishments of the wicked, are designed to bring about their conversion and happiness.

The first rule which divine justice observes in the dispensation of sufferings, is never to proceed to extreme rigour, till every gentle means has been exhausted without effect; so that torments and sufferings will only be employed, as far as they shall be absolutely requisite for the conversion of the sinner.

If all mankind could be delivered from the bondage of sin, and brought to God by methods of gentleness and beneficence, he would never make use of any other; for he declares in his word, that he doth not willingly afflict, or grieve the children of men: Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live? He would draw them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and when the necessity of their situation requires severity, it is called doing his strange work; and bringing to pass his act, his strange act. Thence he proclaims himself to be "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious; long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth." Thence the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long suffering by which he invites men to repentance; but above all, thence the greatest and most inconceivable instance of his infinite love to sinners, in the gift of his only begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life." So true is it that divine justice never proceeds to extreme rigour, till every gentle means has been exhausted without effect; and till severity is thereby become necessary, as the only means of conversion.

Besides the reasons that we see in the nature of perfect goodness, for this first rule in the dispensation of punishment; we can discern another relative to ourselves. The general design of God is to excite in the hearts of his creatures a sincere and ardent love. "My son give me thine heart," is the language of all his dealings; he is a kind, a gracious Father, who will be loved with all our soul and with all our strength; we must have no will but his, and constantly, sincerely, and universally sacrifice our own, with cheerfulness to his most perfect, and excellent will. This is the holiness, the sanctification to which we are all called. But if such is our vocation, the divine Being will on his part shew himself to us, as infinitely amiable, and worthy to be beloved; and it is not by severity, by stripes this is to be effected; but by gentleness, by tokens of love, and affection. "He therefore leaves not himself without a witness, in that he does us good." He discovers himself to us as a tender parent, constantly concerned for the good of his children, and labouring to advance their happiness. Those who by a wise improvement of the means granted them, shew themselves obedient to the instructions of his word, and providence, are drawn by the bands of love. Such, have no need of the severities of an offended God. He may indeed see fit for the exercise of their faith, and patience, to send them trials and afflictions in this world, "for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" but such afflictions tend to detach them from the world, and to make them more fit for heaven; they are the scourgings of a son who is owned and received.

But those on the contrary who make the blessing of divine goodness subservient only to their worldly lusts; "who love darkness better than light," who neglect the means of instruction, and salvation, which are multiplied in the midst of them; and live in a total forgetfulness of God, and of his will, to gratify their own; in a word, those "who despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads to repentance," for those, the extreme rigour of punishment will be absolutely necessary in order to their salvation. For how shall those arrive at the knowledge of the truth who hate it, and prefer darkness; or acquire that docility of heart, without which they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven? For such, severity alone is suita-

life, not indeed with an immediate design to create in them the love of their Maker; but to destroy those obstacles which his love could not conquer; and to give efficacy to those means of instruction, which were before ineffectual. The wrath of God must humble and subdue such proud hearts; and bitter pangs of distress must make them feel, what they were told in vain, *that God is not mocked;* and that though an infinitely kind and merciful father, he is also infinitely powerful, will be heard when he speaks, and obeyed when he commands. Thus we are told, that "the wicked by the hardness and impenitence of their heart, treasure up for themselves wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," and that "if we sin wilfully after having received the kowledge of the truth," by Jesus Christ, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary." Let us now examine *how, and to what degree*, divine justice will employ this method of conversion.

If the first rule which divine justice follows in the dispensation of punishment, is never to proceed to rigour, till every other method has been tried in vain; the second is to employ that rigour only so much, and so long, as shall be necessary to the destruction of sin, and the conversion of the sinner.

This second rule carries its own evidence with it, and is a necessary consequence of the first already established. For when every other method has failed of success, severity must be employed, and will be made use of by God to subdue sin, and bring about the sanctification, and salvation of the sinner; to what degrees or duration soever it may be necessary to extend this discipline, in order to obtain the end. This then is a war, an implacable, and eternal war against sin; a terrible war, which can only be terminated by the destruction of that hideous monster in the soul of the wicked. The Being whose designs are immutable, will not change his purpose; this change must take place in the sinner; who must *be transformed* however painful the operation; must become *a new man*, a *new creature*, and for this end the divine judgments must make war upon him.

But it is not enough to appeal to reason in vindication of this truth: I will confirm it yet farther from scripture. Isaiah expresses it, when he declares "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." But some will object, that if according to this divine declaration *there is no peace to the wicked*, they must be lost without possibility of return. Ah! take heed, lest by precipitating your judgment you falsify this sacred declaration, and apply to it a meaning which it has not, nor ever can have. To understand it aright, it must be confronted with that passage, where the God of truth confirms with an oath, that *he wills the conversion and life of a sinner*. Opposite as these declarations may seem, it is nevertheless the Supreme Being who speaks in both, and who speaks of the sinner. and as no contradiction can reside in him, there must be a sense in which they perfectly agree. Why then, let me ask, *is there no peace to the wicked?* Is it founded on the hatred of their Maker, who wills their eternal and irrevocable misery? No, he declares that he wills their conversion and life. The reason is manifestly this; that so long as the wicked remain in an impenitent state, they cannot obtain that life and happiness, for the enjoyment of which they were created. They must therefore turn from their wickedness in order *to live*, and till this revolution is accomplished, they will most assuredly experience the effects of this formidable, and implacable war; which the Almighty has proclaimed against them, in the words already quoted.

If any thing more express should be needful upon this head, let us attend to the words of Jeremiah; "Behold the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind, it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return until he hath done it, and until he hath performed the intent of his heart; in the latter days ye shall consider it." *These latter days*, are made use of by the prophets, to denote that more resplendent light, that farther manifestation of divine mercy, that *intent of his heart*, relative to the universal salvation of men; which was according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Conformable to which the prophet declares, that the fierce anger of the Lord shall not return *until he hath performed the intent of his heart;* those purposes of eternal and universal salvation, the fuller manifestation of which, was reserved *for the latter days*.

In Ezekiel also we find the same idea conveyed under the image of a vessel of brass, totally corrupted by inveterate rust; and the sufferings of the wicked, represented by the figure of a consuming fire. "Set it empty upon the coals, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed; she hath wearied me with her lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire. In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. I the Lord have spoken it, it shall come to pass, and I will do it, I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent." How formidable a menace is here! a declaration from the Most High, that when the gentle methods of his grace have been insufficient to cleanse the wicked from their filthiness, he will employ the dreadful rigours of his *indignation;* which are compared *to a consuming fire*. Nor will he go back, neither will he spare, till the wicked are purged from their filthiness.

Lastly on this subject, I recommend to my

readers the perusal of the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, from the fourteenth verse to the end; when he will perceive the second rule of divine justice clearly laid down, and expressed in the most striking manner; and the chastisement of God increased and prolonged, in proportion to the obduracy, and resistance of the wicked; till at length their obstinacy is overcome.

Let us not quit this subject, without making one important reflection to which it naturally leads, concerning the judgment we ought to form of the terrible nature of the sufferings of a future state; from the difficulty of the effect they are intended to produce. How formidable must be those sufferings which can soften the obdurate heart, break asunder the many chains by which the soul of the sinner is held in bondage, root up the most inveterate habits, destroy the subtle poison of unruly and sinful passions, whose infection has spread, and corrupted all the powers of the soul, all the faculties of the mind, all the sentiments of the heart; in a word, such sufferings, as shall entirely change the sinner, give him in all respects different ideas, different views, tastes, and inclinations.

St. Peter remarks, that "if the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" as if he had said, if so many trials and afflictions are necessary for the salvation of the just, of those who have acquired the habits of virtue, and are sincerely attached to their duty; how great and terrible both in degree and duration will the sufferings be, which are reserved for those, whom long habits of sin have corrupted and hardened? With what just abhorrence should it fill us for sin, that fatal enemy of our peace, that tyrant of the soul, from whom it will require such dreadful sufferings to free us! The gospel, that dispensation of mercy, which was given that we might flee from the wrath to come; that ineffable gift of the only begotten Son of God, whereby whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but obtain everlasting life, however compassionate to the penitent offender, speaks nothing but terror and alarm to the guilty and hardened sinner. How striking, how awful, and at the same time how merciful, are the representations of future torments! Let us collect the leading features of the striking picture, and we shall see that it is indeed "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." It is represented under the figure of perishing, of being cast into outer darkness, of a worm that never dies, of a fire that is never quenched, of a lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, into which the wicked shall be cast; and where they shall *perish eternally*. And though neither the word perish is here to be understood, as a total extinction of being; nor can that of *eternal* imply endless duration; nevertheless they are undoubtedly employed to signify bitter anguish, deep and durable distress; which can only be terminated by a total change in the disposition of the sufferer. And this leads us to the third rule of divine justice, in the dispensation of sufferings, and informs us when the Supreme Being ceases punishment.

As it is against sin, that the wrath of the Lord is declared; he will constantly pardon, and receive into favour, the sincerely penitent offender. Repentance appeases divine anger, and disarms its justice; because it accomplishes the end infinite goodness has in view, even when arrayed in the awful majesty of avenging justice; which was severe because the moral state of the sinner required such discipline; and which when that state is reversed, by conversion and holiness, will have nothing to bestow suitable to it, but the delightful manifestations of mercy and forgiveness.

But here some will ask, whether such repentance is sufficient thus to disarm almighty justice; after having by a long and obstinate disobedience audaciously violated the holy laws of God? Is repentance a sufficient satisfaction, a suitable reparation for the offence committed against infinite majesty; a proper vindication of the divine commands; and can repentance, however sincere, annihilate what is past? shall the sinner be thus acquitted and treated as if he had not offended?

There are many things I could advance in answer to this objection. I could prove that even the least degree of resentment and vengeance is a carnal emotion of the mind; that it belongs only to human nature; and to that, in its degraded and animal state; that nothing resembling these sentiments can be found in the Deity; that he does not, properly speaking, inflict sufferings, because the sinner has offended, but to the end that he may sin no more: thus the divine chastisements relate to the past, only, as they are connected with the future; that with respect to the Divine Majesty, our evil, any more than *our good, cannot extend*; no self-interest, therefore, can incline him to inflict punishment, no dignity, perfectly independent on human actions, can induce him to severity. That the honour of the divine law is sufficiently guarded by the punishment of the sinner, as long as he remains impenitent, and by the faithful and obedient adherence of the penitent offender; that divine justice is always satisfied when it attains its end; and that this end is always attained, whenever the sinner is brought to repentance.

But instead of insisting on these arguments, however just, I will call the attention to those clear and remarkable declarations of God himself in his word. And first, in the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel, where he says, "if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, and shall not die." And shall not his former sins be brought into account against him? No; for the Lord goes on to declare, that *all his transgressions that he hath committed, shall not be mentioned unto*

him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. But why will not divine justice punish former offences? The Being, against whom they were committed, condescends to instruct us in the reason: "have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live?" And is not this in express terms to assert, that to punish the sinner after his conversion, for his former sins, would be, to take pleasure in the death of the wicked? or in other words, it would be hatred, revenge, and cruelty; odious and horrible sentiments, which can never be found in a being who desires the happiness of his creatures, and whose severities have this end in view. Therefore the happiness of the sinner is inseparable from his conversion.

A second answer to the objection, not less positive than that already quoted, may be found in the first chapter of Isaiah, where the Supreme Being, after reproaching the children of Israel for their extreme corruption and hypocrisy, says, "wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well." After which he adds, "come now, and let us reason together." According to the apprehensions of those whose opinions I am combating, the Judge might allege that they who commit such things are worthy of death. And what can the criminal bring in his defence? Nothing, certainly, to efface his past transgressions; though, through divine grace, and divine chastisements, he may, conformably to the command of his Maker, have washed and made him clean, and put away the evil of his doings; have ceased to do evil, and learned to do well. We know that the judge of all the earth will do right. Attend, therefore, to the sentence; "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red, like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Another, and not less remarkable, declaration is also to be found in Isaiah: "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." And lest this readiness to forgive should appear incomprehensible to men *who are evil*, Divine Goodness condescends to account for his conduct. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways; and my thoughts than your thoughts."

And after all these declarations by the mouth of the prophets, on the part of God, *he hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son*, who, in his gospel, is the messenger of such terrible threatenings to the wicked, and is charged with the execution of them at the last day. He represents the Deity as a *Father who had two sons*, under whom are included the righteous and the wicked. The younger requires of his father the portion of goods allotted to him, and takes his journey into a far country, where wasting his substance with riotous living, he is reduced by famine to the most extreme want: in this calamity, which is meant to signify the chastisements of the wicked, and which, from its severity becomes salutary, the young man *comes to himself, and resolves to go to his father*; here we behold the returning penitent. Let us observe how the parent of mankind receives such.—"While his son was yet afar off, his father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him;" and instead of answering his confession of his unworthiness with severity, or reproach, he commands "his servants to bring forth the best robe and put it on him; to put a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet;" and to make ready the festival which was to celebrate his return. Such is the conduct of the father with his disobedient but penitent son; whereby our divine Master confirms, in a very striking example, the declaration of Isaiah: "that when the wicked forsakes his way, and returns unto the Lord, he will have mercy upon him, and abundantly pardon him." But his dealings with the elder son are yet more remarkable, yet more affecting. He returns from the field, and being informed of the reason of the rejoicing he heard within, "is angry and will not go in;" upon which his father comes out and entreats him; but he, giving way to confused and carnal ideas of justice, makes to him the same objection which may arise in the minds of many of my readers: "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I, at any time, thy commandments; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this, thy son is come, who has devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." This complaint being founded on facts, appears both just and reasonable. Let us therefore attentively consider the answer, and remember, that it is God who speaks in it: "Son; thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Is not the enjoyment of every true good, in the presence of his father, sufficient for the elder? Or, does the essence of happiness consist in the exclusion of others?—Now with respect to the younger, his father declares, that "it was meet they should make merry and be glad, for a brother who was dead and is alive again; was lost and is found." How sublime, how truly divine is this answer! The elder son made no mention of the repentance of his brother, esteeming it as nothing, while the tender and compassionate father looked upon that repentance as every thing; and the whole of the argument is founded upon it; "thy brother was dead, and is alive again; was lost and is found;" therefore "it was meet we should make merry and be glad." How truly might we gather from this reply, that the ways of the Almighty, are not our ways! And how strongly does it evince this important truth, that the

Divine Being will constantly pardon every sinner who returns to him, by a sincere repentance.

Such are the three immutable rules, which divine justice observes in dispensing sufferings; which I shall not recapitulate, because they are founded in reason, and positively proved from scripture: but I shall observe, that if these declarations are indeed the words of God, the second proof of the sublime proposition I mean to establish, must be true also; viz. That all the punishments, which will be inflicted on the wicked, in a future state, are designed for their conversion; so that they are real corrections.

Thirdly, and lastly, I shall shew, by a variety of passages from scripture, the absolute impossibility of the eternal duration of sufferings, because, those passages are incompatible with such a signification. I shall reduce them under three classes, to avoid confusion.

The first class comprehends all such texts as compare the duration of divine severity, with that of divine favour. The psalmist says, speaking of God, "his anger endureth but for a moment, in his favour is life;" and the reason of this, evidently is, that his anger is exercised for a time, that he may display the effects of his favour, throughout all eternity. His anger is a transient mean; his favour, an established end. Were it otherwise, alas! And were the sufferings of the wicked to last forever, we should be obliged to reverse the text: for this mortal life, the only period in which they could enjoy any portion of divine favour, is surely but a moment, compared with an eternal duration! But thanks be to God, *his word* every where contradicts this dreadful supposition; and it is not less true now, than when he declared to his ancient people, "in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee."

I proceed next to another class of passages, if possible, more decisive than the former; which expressly declare, that, "the Lord will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever." And we do not speak the same language with the psalmist, when we maintain, that future suffering, which is *the wrath to come*, will not last eternally, because, *he will not keep his anger for ever?* The contest which is to destroy sin, will be long and painful to sinners, but *as they are not stronger than God*, he must at length prevail, *for he will not always chide.* How comforting is it to the soul oppressed and terrified almost to despair, by the weight of her sins, and the horrid apprehension of eternal sufferings, *to taste this good word of the Lord*, which our Saviour has assured us, *shall never pass away*, though heaven and earth should be removed. How delightful to find in it, those comforting words of the prophet Jeremiah: "the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."

I come now to the third class, which comprehend all those passages, describing the Supreme Being as our Creator. And these, like all the former, are proofs founded on the highest authority, that of God himself; and yet this is not all, for as his word is an address to our reason, so he condescends to reason with us, that he may convey light and conviction to our souls; which is evident in all those texts, representing the Divine Being as our Maker. Creation, is our primeval title to divine love and beneficence: the gift of existence is the first, and fundamental blessing; the seal, and token, of every other. We know from thence, that he is good, and full of love to us; because, when he had no need of us, he created us; and in conferring existence upon us, we, and our happiness, are become his care. By that act of wisdom, goodness, and power, the Creator has undertaken the charge of our happiness: and, had he not certainly known he could accomplish it, he would never have given us being. But let us attend to those inspired words of the psalmist, which speak the language of confidence and assurance: "the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever; forsake not the work of thine own hands. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." And what is that concern so interesting to me? What, but my happiness! the utmost happiness of which my nature is capable? Now, from the first moment of my being, to the present, he has not ceased to conduct me towards, and to prepare me for, that celestial happiness: and had I constantly adhered to the salutary dictates of his providence and grace, and not turned aside to do mine own will; I should, doubtless, have made a far greater progress in the career of happiness. But how remote soever I may yet be from this desirable attainment, yet I know *that the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me;* and, that whatever means my moral state may require, will be made use of to elevate me to perfection and felicity. But how do I know it? *because his mercy endureth forever.* This is the solid basis on which my everlasting hopes repose. This mercy is inexhaustible, can never be tired, nor fail of the time requisite for the execution of its designs; because, to him *a thousand years are as one day*, and, eternity is his. Thus, whatever the freedom of my will has resisted here, will be accomplished hereafter, where I shall be chastised, and saved from those sins that place an obstacle between me and my happiness; where Divine Goodness will, if necessary, employ the most rigorous and terrible means, to bring me to supreme felicity; *for he will not forsake the work of his hands.* So long, therefore, as it shall be

true, that I am his work; so long will it be true also, that he cannot abandon me; and these admirable words of David, which I apply to myself, relate equally to all my brethren, to every son of Adam.

But, must I now compare these luminous and exhilarating truths, with the gloomy, and discomforting opinion I am combating? Alas! were the torments of the wicked of infinite duration, these sublime truths would not be such for the reprobate; it would not be true for them, *that the Lord would perfect that which concerneth them!* It would not be true for them, *that the mercy of the Lord endureth forever!* Nor would it be true, *that he doth not forsake the work of his hands!* Forsake did I say, Ah! shall I have the courage to follow this dreadful system through all its revolting consequences? Happy were it for them, did he forsake them; did he utterly abandon, and leave them a prey to death and the grave, where annihilation might swallow them up forever. No; his almighty power must be displayed in their resurrection; in creating them, as it were, a second time, in giving them an immortal existence, to the end, that the fierce anger, the implacable terrors of the Lord, may be discharged upon them throughout all eternity. And is this *the Father of mercies?* The Parent of the human race? No; it is the phantom of error. Gracious God! By what prodigy of blindness, art thou thus misrepresented, in the midst of those very sinners, for whom thou gavest thy well-beloved Son, that he might perfect that which concerneth them.

But I turn from this terrifying aspect, to finish my third class of texts, with those comforting and restoring words in Isaiah; where we shall hear our merciful Creator declare that he doth not punish or reject forever. "For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones;" (that is, such as my chastisements have humbled and converted.) "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." What a declaration is here! *He will not contend forever*, but till the heart of the sinner is become humble and contrite. Then will the High and Holy One, receive him into his presence, *and revive his spirit:* and he will act thus, for the eternal reason himself declares, lest the souls to whom he hath given existence, should fail before him. Now will not the same reason subsist at the great day of accounts? Will it not be equally true then, as now; that he is the maker of our souls?

The passages which come under the fourth head, express the universal destination of men, to salvation, happiness, and life eternal: and are so many declarations absolutely incompatible with the eternal duration of sufferings? Were it otherwise, it would not be true, that all men were created for happiness; but on the contrary, that two very opposite destinations were assigned them; some to felicity, others to infinite misery. Such, however, is not the language of the divine word: "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved;" *he is the Saviour of all men:* and in order to announce this grand truth, as a thing that will infallibly take place, and which will be equally certain and universal as our condemnation to mortality on earth we are told, "that as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, (to death) even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Thus we see, how expressly the word of God declares the universal salvation of mankind to be his will and purpose; and what will assuredly take place.

Now, if it be true, that scripture agrees with itself, and with reason, it is evident that we must understand every dispensation of the almighty, as corresponding with the great end he has in view; the universal salvation of his creatures. The pain and sufferings of the world to come, cannot, without doing violence to reason and scripture, be separated from this great scheme, which almighty wisdom has planned; and must therefore be *means* of salvation to the reprobate; real chastisements, inflicted for their conversion and amendment: consequently by the word *eternal*, we are not to understand *an infinite*, but *a limited*, though probably to some, a very long duration.

The ancient covenant made with Abraham and his posterity, was peculiar to the Jewish nation, and excluded every other. It was to serve as the foundation of that new, and better covenant, which the divine Being designed of universal extent; and to which it was to give place. This new and universal covenant, with all nations, by which the gentiles should be called, and the *heathen become an inheritance;* is repeatedly foretold in the prophetic books. It is therefore a truth, founded on the records of that ancient covenant, that its duration was intended only for a season, and that it should give place to another. It is nevertheless, together with its rites, and ceremonies, repeatedly called *eternal:* and if an infinite duration, is to be understood by that term, the Old and New Testament are in opposition to each other; nay, the former is in a state of disagreement with itself. How therefore do divines in every communion of Christians, adjust this difficulty? They agree to take reason for their guide, and very justly, and rationally decide, that the word *eternal* only implies a *long*, but *limited* duration; and that nothing more was meant, than the continuance of the ancient covenant, till it had answered the important purposes for which it was established, of preparing the way for another, and universal covenant, by which it was to be abrogated.

Now this method of reasoning, so just and satisfactory, is not more natural in this in-

stance, than in its application to future punishments. For since the word of God, which brings to man the glad tidings of eternal salvation, at the same time calls future sufferings *eternal;* it is clear, that by a parity of reason, with that already quoted, we are not to understand that word in its absolute sense; as it would thereby be in manifest contradiction with the revealed will of our Maker; but that we are to take it in a sense agreeable to the word of God, to what we know of his nature, and to the powers and faculties which he has given us for our direction: and this we shall do, if we admit that it implies a permanence, and perpetuity; till such time, as by the destruction of sin, and conversion of the sinner, the paternal views of our Creator shall be fulfilled.

There remains lastly, and under the fifth head, yet, one very remarkable text, where our Lord Jesus Christ himself, gives the name of chastisement to future sufferings: *these*, says he, speaking of the wicked, "shall go away into everlasting punishment." Now, though the word punishment is made use of in our versions; in the original Greek the word κόλασις, is peculiarly applicable to the pruning of trees, which therefore implies correction, or chastisement; and was in use to express that correction, by which men were made better, like to trees, who have undergone the operation of pruning, or lopping off the dead, or unfruitful branches.

In my preliminary discourse I promised to cite no human authorities, in proof of what I should advance; hitherto I have adhered to reason, and scripture; but, as in this particular instance, I cannot quote the latter in the vulgar tongue, I am obliged to have recourse to the original, and to prove to my reader, by such authorities as cannot be suspected, that the Greek word κόλασις signifies *chastisement.* And these authorities so respectable, are two learned divines; one, the illustrious Grotius, in *his rights of war and peace;* the other, the celebrated Wyttenbach, in his Essay on doctrinal theology. Grotius says expressly, that the kind of punishment which tends to the improvement of the criminal; is what the philosophers called among other things κόλασις or chastisement;* and Wyttenbach, who writes this passage from Grotius, says, that "God, in the infliction of sufferings, has three ends in view; the first of which, is the correction of the offender, in order to his future amendment. And that the Greeks frequently gave to such sufferings the name κόλασις.

Thus we see from unquestionable evidence, that the Son of God himself, calls future punishment *chastisement:* now a never ending chastisement, is a contradiction in terms. The word *eternal* must therefore, in that connection, signify *a long and dreadful correction,* which will never cease, till sin is subdued, and the heart of the sinner disposed, and properly prepared to experience the efficacy of divine redemption; that power of God, whereby the Son was sent to be the Saviour of the world, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man; not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

If then the sufferings of a future state, are so dreadful by their duration, they are no less so by their nature. Let us not infer from the word *chastisement,* made use of by our Saviour, that the torments of hell will bear any resemblance to the corrections of the present world; otherwise than as both are intended to promote the same salutary end, for in every other respect, both of degree, and duration, they will be so entirely different, that in the original language of the New Testament, they do not even bear the same names. Scripture describing the chastisements of this life, in the epistle to the Hebrews, makes use of the Greek word παιδεία which signifies the *correction of a child,* which is inflicted with the rod. "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth and scourgeth, (or strikes with the rod) every son whom he receiveth." But the great and terrible chastisements of a future state are expressed by another word; and one that denotes, as I have already said, a long and severe chastisement with a two-edged sword, which will cut to the quick, in order to sever, and lop off every dead and corrupted branch.

Such are some of the principal declarations of scripture, which contain the third proof of this great truth; that the punishments which the Divine Being inflicts on the wicked hereafter, are so many corrections to bring about their conversion, and are real chastisements. Each of these respectable declarations taken independent of the rest, as they proceed from the God of all truth, ought to be of sufficient weight for our conviction. But what transcendent light must result from their union! Let us endeavour to collect their scattered rays into one focus, and let that focus be our heart, that by their lively ardour, each of us may be animated by divine love!

Oh Eternal Father of us all! *Thine anger then endures but for a moment,* because thy severity is only one of the means, by which thine infinite wisdom leads us to thee; but in thy favour is life, an eternity of life, to the end that thou mightest have mercy upon all. It is for this reason that thou wilt not always chide, nor reject for ever, because of the souls thou hast made, lest they should fail before thee; for thou wilt not abandon the work of thine hands. Conformable then to the immutable designs of thine all-powerful will, thou wilt perfect that which concerns us, so as in the end, *to be the Saviour of all* without exception: yes; even the Saviour of those who are now the slaves of sin, and hardened so as to resist every gentle method, which thy grace employs for their sanctification. For such, thou hast prepared a last and terrible expedient, to be exercised only, *if*

* Droit de la Guerre et de la paix, de la traduction de Barbeyrac. Liv. 11. chap. 20. § 7.

need be, a rigorous, *an eternal*, in a word, a just *chastisement*, proportioned, both in degree and duration, to the resistance and obduracy of the unhappy sinners who have incurred it. But to preserve us from incurring this tremendous punishment, thou hast given thy well beloved Son, and hast constituted him our king, and our judge; that he may reduce to thine empire, such, among us, as resist thee; may break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel; and when, by these means, their hearts *are broken and humbled*; then will this Saviour, this high priest, this king, bring them all to dwell with thee in thy high and holy place: and thus, having finished the work which thou gavest him to do, he will surrender at thy feet the sceptre, which, for this important purpose, thou hast given him, and will deliver up the kingdom to thee, that thou mayest be *all in all*.

I think we may now conclude that we have established a fundamental principle whence to form consistent ideas of the justice, and severity of God; who punishes the wicked that he might bless them, by turning them every one from their iniquities. How different from that implacable severity, which under the specious title of justice, would be insatiable vengeance, infinite cruelty, incompatible with goodness!

If we allow that severity is a branch of goodness, it will set that amiable attribute in its true light, and prevent us from falling into the dangerous illusion, of expecting nothing from divine love, but mercies and favours. We should not only consider the *end*, but the *means* of conducting us to felicity; which will be severe, "upon every soul of man that doeth evil." The goodness of the Deity is as enlightened as it is infinite; it is a goodness inseparable from wisdom, and consequently firm, and exempt from such false compassion as arises from weakness: an inflexible, and inexorable goodness, which without being influenced by our cries and supplications, will complete its designs; in a word, a just and real goodness, which will treat us in a way suitable to our moral state, and by which the sufferings that are to elevate us to supreme happiness, are as certain as the infinite goodness of God itself.

But, if divine justice is so formidable a branch of goodness, it is not less comfortable to be assured, that we can never be called to endure any suffering which is not dispensed by the paternal goodness of the Lord; that our fruit will be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life; and that a time will come, when we shall bless and praise him for our chastisements, as for the most real and salutary favours. Let us therefore conclude this long paragraph with the proposition with which we entered upon it; that the infinite justice of God far from opposing his goodness, is in itself, a branch, formidable indeed, but nevertheless, an important and interesting branch of divine goodness.

I come next to consider, *the infinite authority of God, which, far from being contrary to, is entirely founded upon goodness.*

This authority consists in the absolute, and unlimited right which the Supreme Being has of disposing of us, and of our actions. By the first of these rights, he can deal with us as he pleases; and by the second, has an undoubted right to our obedience in whatever he commands. In virtue of this double right, which constitutes his supreme authority, *he is our sovereign Lord, and our absolute master*. Such is the infinite authority of God, than which it is not possible to conceive any greater.

To these two rights on the part of God, two obligations follow on ours. The first is our humble and entire acquiescence in every thing he sees fit to dispense: and the second, our faithful and willing obedience to all his commands; which obligation is as extensive, and as unlimited, on our part, as the authority of God itself. In virtue of this obligation, we are his servants, his slaves; whose only lot must ever be, submission and obedience. Such is our entire dependance with respect to God in virtue of his authority, that, it is impossible to conceive a stronger obligation.

Let us now examine the foundation of this authority; for the divine authority as it is real, must be established on some good reason, as its incontestable proof and title. All authority destitute of such foundation, is chimerical, and the unjust claim of usurpation. Reason and scripture agree in making *the act of creation* the foundation of this divine prerogative. Reason tells us that to God belongs, and on his good pleasure must depend, every thing he has made; and that the Creator of the universe must be its Lord. Scripture informs us that the most high God, is the possessor of heaven and earth; that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; and in Ezekiel, behold, all souls are mine. Thus, in the hundredth Psalm, the inhabitants of the earth are called upon to rejoice, "because that the Lord has made them, and not they themselves." And lastly to shew, that creation is the title of this authority: scripture farther represents it under the image of a potter, who fashions the clay according to his will. We find in Jeremiah a remarkable parable to this purpose. God having sent the prophet to go down to the potter's house, where the vessel that he had made being marred in his hand, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good unto him; upon which the prophet was commanded to speak to the people, saying, "O house of Israel! cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel!" It is impossible to express, more strongly, the absolute authority of our Maker, in consequence of our being *the work of his hands*.

Mankind are generally agreed on this subject, yet they strangely pervert the truth, by opposing this authority to infinite goodness For in the divine authority they discover res-

son to justify the infinite misery of the reprobate; and maintain, that as the authority of God is infinite and unlimited, he has a right to inflict on them never-ending torments. And in order to silence every expostulation, the words of St. Paul are applied to this subject: "who art thou, O man! that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Thus does a truth ill-understood, lead to the most absurd consequences!

It is therefore of the last importance to shew that the barbarous right, attributed to the Almighty, of rendering his creatures infinitely wretched, is a right absolutely impossible, in its very nature; and consequently, that we do not lessen the divine authority, by excluding from it this pretended, this horrible right; as I hope to prove, upon farther examination.

If then the authority of God arises from the act of creation, let us consider what there can be in this act that may serve as a just foundation of this infinite authority. In the act of creation I can distinguish but two things: the almighty *power*, which formed us; and the *will*, which led him to create us. The divine authority must be the result of one or the other of these. Now it is evident that power alone, considered in itself, can never be the foundation of divine authority. The idea of power and strength, and that of authority and right, have no natural connection. A being may have sufficient strength and power to subject me to his pleasure, but this alone can never give him any right; if therefore he has any real authority over me, it must be derived from some other source, for power alone is the pretended right of a usurper; similar to that of the beasts of the forest. This is a proposition so clear, that all demonstration would tend to obscure it; no one will ever dispute it; I may therefore propose it as an axiom, that the reason of superior strength is no reason at all, or that power alone can confer no just right of authority.

It is therefore in the *will* we are to seek for the foundation of that supreme authority which the Divine Being possesses over his creatures. Now that *will*, which from nothing caused us to be, was the first act of infinite goodness, and arose from the pure principle of benevolence and love. It is that which has constituted the Creator the tender Parent of all, and is the pledge of that happiness, which, issuing from him, must, in the end, fill with felicity every intellectual nature. Ah! when I contemplate the Being of beings, under the interesting point of view, in which creation places him; when I view him as a faithful Creator, as an eternal and gracious Father, who gave me existence that he might give me happiness, I am not at a loss to discern the foundation of his infinite authority; I see that it is the right of rendering me happy in the way best suited to my nature, and by the means best adapted to the end. I then perceive the strongest and most intimate obligation on my part, to submit blindly, and without reserve, to this authority; because, in my nature I find a constant thirst after supreme happiness: I see the folly and extravagance of ever complaining of the dispensations or laws of an infinitely wise Being: the presumption in a weak and ignorant creature of deciding on the means by which its happiness is to be procured. "Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker: let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. But shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, what makest thou? Or thy work; he hath no hands? Thus saith the Lord, the holy one of Israel; ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me."

Since then the infinite authority of God over his creatures, is his unlimited right of conferring happiness in his own way, let us never ascribe to that prerogative, the right of rendering them forever miserable. Whatever frail mortals may pretend, this right is absolutely impossible in itself, because revolting from nature. Creation, which is an act of goodness, could not confer it; for to create for the purpose of infinite misery, would be an act so unjust, so cruel, and tyrannical, that we cannot conceive a being capable of it; it would be contrary to that very nature of which God himself is the Author; and in a word, is absolutely impossible. It is not on any such principle that our heavenly Father reasons with us, concerning that authority founded on creation, since he alleges that very act, as the reason why "he will not contend forever, nor be always wroth," as I have already shown, in quoting that text.

From what has been said, therefore, we may discern the nature of that authority which the Divine Being possesses over us, as our Creator; a right, not properly the offspring of power, but of infinite and unmerited love. By this act of paternal goodness, he has given us the pledge, the sure and certain pledge of its eternal exercise; directed by that wisdom, and attended by that power, which are alone capable of employing the means necessary for securing our perfection and felicity; and if our natural desire of happiness leads us to accept existence as a precious benefit, the same nature lays us under the strongest obligation to acknowledge this infinite authority, by receiving all its dispensations and laws, with the most cheerful and profound submission. Since the infinite authority of our Creator, far from being contrary to infinite goodness, is entirely founded upon it.

Our next consideration, relates *to the infinite majesty of the Supreme Being, which far from being contrary to, is built upon goodness, as its firm, and eternal foundation.*

When we consider the Divine Being *in himself*, and independent of any will to his creatures, he presents himself to our astonished imagination, in the infinite grandeur of supreme *majesty*. What then is this divine majesty? It is the splendour arising from the union of all the divine perfections, as the first, the intelligent and powerful cause of the universe.

As the first cause of the universe, we behold in God the being of beings, whose glorious attributes are all eternal, independent, immutable, infinite and necessary, as is his nature and existence. What grandeur! What majesty is here!

As the intelligent, and powerful cause of the universe, we behold God as an eye, pervading, enlightening, penetrating the immensity of space, and the revolutions of time. We see an all-powerful arm, which nothing can resist, and which holds all things under its direction. By these two perfections, which are infinite, we may conceive the *omnipresence* of God, that immensity *which fills heaven and earth.*

Such is the infinite majesty of God. How feeble is language! how defective every term by which we try to express our thoughts on this sublime subject! Our thoughts themselves, our most elevated conceptions, alas! What are they on a subject so marvellous! which absorbs and confounds every finite intelligence? "O Lord my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty! Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise? His greatness is unsearchable!"

When I contemplate the divine majesty in itself, when I behold a necessarily existent being; a being immutable and infinite, whose knowledge, power, and presence are universal and unlimited: I am filled with a respect, a veneration, bordering on apprehension and terror, which leads me to exclaim with the Psalmist; "What is man, O Lord! that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man that thou visitest him?" But when to these ideas, I join those arising from infinite goodness; when I remember that the being infinitely great, is as infinitely, and as necessarily good; my soul no longer terrified and appalled, considers the majesty of the Deity in its most interesting aspect; it beholds a being necessary in all his attributes, consequently, infinite and immutable in goodness: an eye from which no darkness can hide, but a paternal eye, from which nothing conducive to my happiness can escape, and by whom the very hairs of my head are numbered: an all-powerful, but at the same time, a paternal arm, stretched out for my defence, and able to *perfect that which concerns me*, all that shall be necessary to secure my happiness. How delightful thus to unite the goodness of God to his majesty! From this union results the most perfect idea we can possibly form of the divine nature. *The majesty of God* is all that he is considered in himself; and *the goodness of God*, all that he is, considered in relation to his creatures; and both are so intimately connected that whatever tends to exalt the splendour of his adorable majesty, does not less elevate our ideas of his ineffable goodness.

But notwithstanding this intimate union of majesty and goodness in God, human prejudices have been fertile in discovering means of placing them in opposition; for what cannot prejudice accomplish? The necessity of finding in the Supreme Being something to justify the infliction of never-ending torments on the wicked, has given rise to this contradiction, and led to this absurd reasoning. *Every sin*, will some say, *is committed against God, and consequently against Infinite Majesty.* From this indisputable truth they proceed to draw the following conclusion; *that all sin, even in the most minute degree, deserves infinite punishment, because committed against Infinite Majesty.* I lament the necessity I am under seriously to refute so miserable an argument. But weak as is this reasoning, it is, nevertheless, held by many honest, upright, and in every other respect, intelligent, and cultivated minds. What! *All sin deserves infinite punishment*, because committed against Infinite Majesty! Should we not, instead of refuting such an argument, perceive at the first glance, that it refutes itself, and proves nothing, because it proves infinitely too much? A being who merits infinite punishment, *is a being infinitely culpable*; a being infinitely culpable, *is a being infinitely wicked*; and a being infinitely wicked, *is a being infinite.* Thus is the sinner, mortal man! a being so weak and finite, by the help of this argument, transformed into *an infinite being!* Thus we see the fallacy of an argument which leads to such absurd and irrational conclusions.

But I will go farther, and shew, *that no sin whatever can deserve infinite punishment.*

I admit that all sin is committed against God, and consequently against infinite majesty. It is this which properly constitutes its great malignity. Sin, is a will in man, opposed to the will of God; and this character alone were sufficient to discover to us its odious, its fatal, its presumptuous, and extravagant nature. It is this character of sin which scripture has in view, when it represents *the carnal mind as enmity against God*; and gives to sinners the appellation of *enemies of God*, because, a state of sin, is a state of rebellion against our Maker.

But though all sin bears this odious character, and is committed against infinite majesty; nevertheless, there is, in all sin, an essential circumstance which renders the offender more or less criminal before God. This essential circumstance is *the degree of knowledge* which the sinner has of God, and of his will; so that a man is rendered more or less culpable, in proportion to the greater, or less extent of his knowledge. As this is a principle of common sense, which I believe no one contests, I shall not dwell upon it, or even refer my readers to the many passages in scripture which assert it, because it is impossible they should be ignorant of them; but proceed to shew, that no sin whatever can deserve infinite punishment, unless we can suppose a thing impossible, which is, that the sinner is possessed of an infinite knowledge of God and his will.

Besides, let us call to mind, whenever we speak of the sufferings inflicted by the Divine Being, that they can only be chastisements for the sinner; and that a chastisement without end, is a contradiction in terms, and inconsistent with the ideas we ought to form of the all perfect nature of the Deity.

But, if sin cannot merit infinite punishment, let us see what that suffering is which it does deserve. The principle which I have just been recalling to the recollection of my reader, will enable him to discern, that if divine punishments are chastisements, every sin will deserve sufferings as great, and as durable, as are requisite for the destruction of sin, and the conversion of the sinner.

It is therefore certain there can be nothing in the infinite majesty of God, which can ever stop the course of his infinite goodness. The majesty of God is the union of all those glorious attributes which shine forth in him as the first, the intelligent, and powerful cause of the universe. Thus the majesty of God consists in his necessary, his independent, his eternal, and immutable existence; in his goodness, his wisdom, and his infinite power. Such are the glorious attributes which constitute supreme majesty and grandeur, and which render the being who is possessed of them perfectly sufficient and independent, having nothing either to hope or fear, from any outward cause. To such a being therefore, and to such alone, can absolutely, and exclusively belong a perfect *disinterestedness* in all he does; he alone can possess, in the supreme degree, what among men is called *generosity*, and *magnanimity*, the most sublime, the most glorious qualities by which an intelligent creature can ever resemble the Creator. It belongs to God alone to be *great in goodness*, and to act always, and in every case, from pure love to his creatures; for who, but such a being, is possessed of knowledge capable of discerning, and power to execute all that can constitute the happiness of his creatures? In a word, he cannot be a being of infinite majesty, unless he is a being of infinite goodness. Resentment, hatred, vengeance, and cruelty, were ever the wretched offspring of little minds, of weak and cowardly souls; of those depraved and corrupted beings who are the shameful sport of their base and unruly passions. True magnanimity, such as belongs to him who is *truly great*, knows none of those degrading and animal emotions, and never experiences any but the noble and generous sentiments of clemency, of love, and of beneficence. How far are we, alas! from honouring the Deity, when, under pretence of vindicating the rights of his offended majesty, we attribute to him sentiments that would disgrace a frail mortal! To honour God in a manner becoming his perfections, let us acknowledge with joy, this precious and interesting truth; *that he is infinitely good, and in consequence of that, infinitely great*. When therefore, in the preceding chapter, I undertook to establish the infinite goodness of the Supreme Being, I began, by separately proving those perfections which constitute his Supreme Majesty, from whence I deduced his infinite goodness.

We may therefore conclude this paragraph, by asserting, that the infinite majesty of God rests upon his goodness, as upon a firm and unshaken foundation, because, all the attributes which compose the divine majesty, are eternal and immutable. As long, therefore, as the Deity shall be necessarily existent, independent, eternal and immutable; as long as he shall continue infinitely wise and powerful, so long will he remain infinitely good: and thus, the infinite majesty of God, far from being contrary to, is built upon goodness, as its firm and eternal foundation.

The glory of God, instead of requiring any thing contrary to his infinite goodness, is highly interested in its eternal exercise.

The divine glory is not any single attribute of the Supreme Being, but that resplendent lustre which arises from the union of all his adorable perfections; and may be defined the striking manifestation which the Deity vouchsafes to make of himself and of his perfections, to his creatures, in nature and revelation. All the works of God, whether respecting the creation and government of the universe, or the redemption and salvation of the human race, bear the marks of his glorious attributes, and are stamped with the character of his adorable perfections: For in nature, "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth his handy work: the whole earth is full of his glory." In the great work of redeeming love scripture informs us, that "the Son of God, the author and finisher of our faith, was the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person: the gospel, the glorious gospel of Christ;" and the redemption he came to accomplish, is represented in the epistle to the Ephesians, "as being to the praise and glory of his grace." Thus what one prophet calls *the knowledge of the Lord*, another calls *the knowledge of the glory of the Lord*; because it is in the knowledge of God that his glory consists, agreeable to the definition I have given.

If then the glory of God, is the resplendent and universal manifestation of all his perfections; all that *glory* requires, is that the Divine Being should be known to his intelligent creatures as he is; and therefore it can never require any thing contrary to his infinite goodness. Nevertheless, by a strange perversion of ideas, means have been found of opposing the glory of God to his goodness, and this from the necessity of assigning a reason for the infinite misery of the reprobate. Whoever admits eternal torments, cannot possibly attribute to his Maker a design of saving the whole human race; but as a being supremely wise must propose to himself some end in all he does, so has the glory of God been selected as the end and purpose of all his actions. What a solecism is here! for in separating the glory of God from the happiness of his creatures, it becomes impossible to prove, that all he does is with a view to his

glory. This however, when rightly understood, is a principle I am far from rejecting, but consider as a sublime and sacred truth; as I shall evince hereafter. But this principle, when in the hands of those of whom I am speaking, becomes a convenient mode of plausibly accounting for the infinite misery of the reprobate. The Divine Being, will such argue, does all things for his glory, that is, to manifest his perfections in a striking manner. Thus, at the great day of universal judgment, the goodness and justice of God will be displayed in his paternal love to the righteous, and his tremendous justice to the wicked. Thus far we agree to the truth of this proposition. But they proceed to disguise the nature of divine justice, by supposing it to consist in such severity as can only belong to vengeance and cruelty. They conclude that as the infinite goodness of God will be manifested in the eternal salvation of the elect; so will his justice be displayed in the endless misery of the reprobate: and that as the divine glory requires the manifestation of his infinite justice, it requires the infinite misery of the wicked.

Let us stop to behold the fatal influence of one error, how it corrupts and perverts the sublimest truths. The example before us is striking. All the propositions here laid down are so many sacred and solemn truths. But whither do they lead? Alas! when contaminated by the admission of one fatal error, they conduct those of whom I am speaking, to the most horrid conclusion which can possibly be drawn; that the honour and glory of a Being infinitely good, requires him to shew himself, in effect, infinitely cruel and implacable! How strange, O my God! how inconceivably strange, to make thy glory consist in what must most dishonour thy great name!

In asserting this do we affirm that truth leads to error? No, truth in its purity can never conduct to falsehood; since every consequence which flows from a true principle, is as evidently true as the principle which gave rise to it. But the introduction of a single error, of one false idea, is sufficient to infect and pervert a long chain of truths; each of which, by being allied and incorporated with it, partakes of its falsehood, inasmuch as it conveys ideas opposite to truth: and thus it is in the case before us. The mind, accustomed to attribute to the Divine Being the infliction of endless torments on creatures who exist only by his irresistible will, seeks in him some perfection whereby to lessen the horror of an idea as much opposed to divine goodness, as darkness to light. To this erroneous idea they give the awful and sacred name of *justice*, place it among the divine attributes, and never fail to present it under this false appearance, so that the propositions just stated, though true in themselves, become affected by the association, and lead to this terrible conclusion, that the glory of God requires the infinite misery of the reprobate.

To change the face of things we need therefore only refute this erroneous idea of divine justice, which I have laboured to effect in the preceding paragraph; and I hope not without success. To that definition I refer my reader, and to the consequences which flow from it, which we will now apply to our subject.—If justice is a branch of divine goodness; and rigour, merciful severity, with a view to the correction and amendment of the sufferer, it is evident that the glory of God, though it requires the punishment of the wicked at the great day, requires nothing contrary to infinite goodness; as the exercise of that severe justice is at the same time a manifestation of his goodness.

It would be treating this interesting subject too slightly were I to stop here: I must go yet farther and demonstrate, that the glory of God is sovereignly interested in the eternal exercise of his infinite goodness. Three considerations offer themselves in support of this truth; and I flatter myself my readers will not think the discussion they require, tedious.

The first consideration results from the definition of divine glory. For if this consists in the illustrious manifestation which the Supreme Being makes of all his admirable perfections, it is necessary to that glory, that he should be known as he really is. Now, God is love, pure disinterested benevolence. To know him therefore as he is, we must contemplate him in the character of infinite goodness, and in nothing derogatory to it. The glory of the divine nature requires therefore, the display of an unchangeable, inexhaustible, universal, and eternal goodness to all his creatures. It is thus that the glory of God shines forth in the works of nature, where "he leaves not himself without a witness in that he does good; giving us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and gladness." But if we read this truth inscribed on the works of nature, in what lively characters does it stand expressed in the volume of his grace! where the Father of mercies spares not his own Son, but delivers him up to death for us, together with the most solemn assurance, that "he will with him freely give us all things."

But it may be asked, does not the glory of God require the manifestation of his other perfections? Certainly, as it results from their union. But in the exercise of divine goodness, do we not see infinite wisdom directing, infinite power executing; do we not see divine goodness, under the name of holiness, promulgating the most perfect laws for our improvement and happiness; and does it not assume the formidable appellation of justice, that by chastisements it may accomplish the destruction of sin, that enemy of our peace, and induce us to a cordial and habitual obedience to all the divine commands? And O! what heart can conceive! What tongue can express the praises due to such exalted glory! when all these adorable perfections shall be fully manifested to every creature; sin conquered, and sinners become holy, perfect, and happy! Their hearts, penetrated

with love and gratitude, will forever adore the Author of their existence and felicity, before whose throne will eternally ascend the grateful homage of their thanksgiving and praise, which shall resound through the mansions of celestial glory forever and ever.

The second consideration, by which I mean to shew, that the divine glory is interested in the eternal exercise of infinite goodness, is, that his glory is inseparable from the happiness of every intelligent being. If the perfect glory of God arises from the perfect knowledge of his perfections, this knowledge must become universal to every creature, in order to the complete manifestation of his glory. Now it is impossible that beings should arrive at the knowledge of God, without, in some measure, resembling him. To know God as he is, is to behold him as infinitely amiable; and to view him as infinitely amiable, is to love him with our whole heart; and is not this to be good, perfect, and happy, and to be imitators of him? St. John speaks the same language when he says, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." It is therefore, as certain that all men will, sooner or later, arrive at perfection and happiness, as it is certain that the Divine Being will render his knowledge and glory universal. And what heart is not transported with the most perfect joy, in the view of a futurity so interesting and certain; of a futurity which shall unite the perfect glory of God, and the complete felicity of every creature? And can we ever doubt, that when the Supreme Being is employed in the advancement of his glory; he will not at the same time, by his infinite goodness, "work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure?"

The third, and last consideration, on this subject is, *that the glory of the Creator depends upon the perfection of his creatures;* as the honour of the worker arises from the perfection of his work. Can any thing, on this principle, be more contrary to the glory of God, than the infinite misery of the reprobate? A multitude of intelligent and immortal beings, whose nature and state will be in eternal contradiction the one to the other. For with natures capable of happiness, and desires ardently directed towards it; their eternal portion must be the most horrid and unremitting agony. Description falls infinitely short of the terrible idea; but reason tells us, were we free from prejudice, that it can never advance the glory of the Creator.

If, as some pretend, the reprobate remain forever in a hardened and obdurate state, what do we behold? But a race of beings forever devoted to crimes and sufferings, on whom Almighty Power confers eternal existence, well knowing it will be employed in perpetuating sin and misery! If we are to frame our ideas of the worker from his works, how formidable must those be, which are received from the representation of a multitude of wicked and unhappy beings, plunged forever in all the horrors of sin, of blasphemy, of agony. rage, and despair?

If we admit with others, that the reprobat are capable of sincere repentance, but that i will be unavailing, because the final and irre vocable sentence is pronounced against them this supposition relieves us at least from on contradiction which the former contained; fo thus at least, sin will not last forever, an intelligent creatures will not be eternall wicked in defiance of a nature which cam perfect from the hands of the Creator. Bu if it obviates one difficulty, it raises anothe from which the former was exempt; whicl is, that those beings penitent and converted will then forever aspire at an approach t God as their sovereign good; will forever im plore his mercy and forgiveness; while Goc on his part, though the father of mercies, wil eternally repulse and reject them, and refus *to be exalted, by having mercy upon them;* bu leave them a prey to the most cruel suffer ings. And here again were we, as we are commanded in scripture, to judge of the worker by his work, to what conclusions should we not be led? What ideas should we form of the parent of a numerous family, who would turn from the supplications of his penitent children; and who, possessing the ample means of rendering them perfectly and lastingly happy, should be forever deaf to their intreaties, and inflict upon them unterminating misery?

Which ever way therefore we behold the reprobate in eternal misery; whether as obstinate sinners, or as penitent offenders, we cannot help discovering their state to be in contradiction to the infinite goodness of the divine nature, and consequently absolutely impossible.

The painful object we have been contemplating, requires us to turn our thoughts once more back upon the delightful contrast of Goodness Infinite, which will leave no being in the universe a final prey to wickedness and misery, but will accomplish his work, by enlightening their understanding, rectifying their will, rooting out every vicious habit, destroying every evil propensity; and to effect this, employing every means of gentleness and severity, that his wisdom shall see necessary; till he has at length banished evil from the universe, and rendered all its intelligent inhabitants good and happy. What a prospect! But sublime and delightful as it is, it cannot be exaggerated, because, it is our Creator, the best, as well as greatest of beings, our eternal Father, who is to complete the astonishing work: he who commands us to love him "with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind;" because he is worthy of this absolute love and confidence. How happy is the universe to be subject to his government! What gladness should we feel! What songs of triumph should we raise! How should the earth rejoice, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! And that under his sway we may rest assured, that no moral evil will ever exist, which shall not be destroyed, nor any physical evil which is not

intended as a remedy, whereby moral agents may attain to perfection and felicity; to the immortal glory of the Being infinitely good.

Let us then, with the delightful sentiment arising from perfect conviction, draw this conclusion from all that has been said; that the glory of God, far from requiring any thing contrary to his infinite goodness, is, in the highest degree, interested in its eternal exercise.

Having thus completed the examination of those several perfections in the divine nature, which have been opposed to infinite goodness; I hope it will appear with perfect evidence, that neither the liberty, the holiness, or the justice of the Divine being; neither his authority, his majesty, or his glory, can in any instance whatever, contradict, or oppose his infinite and adorable goodness, of which these several perfections may be said to be branches; and from their strict and intimate connection, to throw new light upon the principal subject of this work. But as the above discussion has been long, it will require the following recapitulation.

The infinite liberty of God, secures to his creatures the perfect and eternal exercise of his infinite goodness; because this liberty consists in an absolute exemption from all restraint, and a freedom to execute every design and purpose of his goodness, without impediment.

The infinite holiness of the divine nature is a capital and delightful branch of infinite goodness; it is that *will* of the Supreme Being which requires the moral perfection of sinners, because absolutely necessary to their happiness; and which hates sin with a perfect hatred, as the obstacle of their felicity, because his love to the sinner is infinite.

The infinite justice of God is another, and a formidable branch of infinite goodness; since from it we are assured of the constant dispensation of whatever is best adapted to our moral state, and consequently, that we shall not escape the infliction of such sufferings as his wisdom shall see necessary for our conversion, and salvation, however dreadful in degree, or lasting in duration.

The infinite authority of God is entirely founded on his infinite goodness; for it is the absolute and unlimited right which the Deity possesses as Creator, of governing his creatures, and leading them to happiness by such means as he sees most proper and efficacious.

The majesty of God is the firm and unshaken foundation of his infinite goodness; for the supreme majesty of the Most High, speaks him a being absolutely self-sufficient, totally disinterested in all his actions, and consequently incapable of any other motive than the happiness of his creatures. This majesty also consists in the various perfections of the divine nature, and as all those glorious attributes are immutable and eternal; the Divine Majesty must ever remain the foundation of infinite goodness.

And lastly, the glory of the Supreme Being is sovereignly interested in the eternal exercise of his infinite goodness; for in order to the true manifestation of this glory, the goodness of God must appear, what it really is, infinite; or in other words, unchangeable, inexhaustible, universal, and eternal; which necessarily leads to the display of the divine wisdom and power, of holiness and justice; and renders the perfect glory of God inseparable from his knowledge, and from the perfection and happiness of his creatures; as the glory of the worker arises from the perfection of his work.

Such is the substance of all that has been advanced on each of these heads; the result of which is, that all the sublime perfections of God as they exist in him, and in the manner they are displayed to his creatures; far from containing any contradiction or opposition to each other, are in a constant and beautiful harmony; and admirably conspire jointly to spread perfection and happiness, throughout the universe; confirming the second consequence arising from infinite goodness, that it is absolutely impossible any thing should be found in God contrary thereto.

As the earnestness with which I have been endeavouring to establish this important truth has led me to present it in every point of view which could tend to its elucidation, disengage it from the fatal mists of errors, and raise it victorious and triumphant from the chaos of prejudice and misapprehension; I fear I may have been led into repetitions unnecessary to the candid, but not void of use to such as have been long prejudiced in favour of contrary opinions.

Let us now proceed to our third consequence, *every act of the Divine Being is an act of infinite goodness.*

A few words will be sufficient to evince the truth of this proposition. Every act of the Divine Being is an act of his will: now as his will is infinitely and perfectly good, every act of his will must be an act of his goodness; as I have already shewn, at large, from reason and scripture, in explaining those words of St. John, *God is love*; where the apostle gives us the most admirable definition possible of the divine will; for the seat of love and benevolence resides not in the understanding, but in the will. In treating this subject therefore, I proved, that the eternal, immutable essence of the divine will, was love for his creatures; the will of rendering them happy; he has no other will but this, none different, none contrary; in a word, his will is love and goodness; for, God is love, which gives rise to the third consequence, that every act of God is an act of his infinite goodness.

As this proposition is important, I must neglect nothing to make it, if possible, yet more evident; to place it in the strongest light I will compare the will of an intelligent creature with the will of the Creator. A created intelligence, however perfect his nature, and elevated his rank in the scale of being, is nevertheless, a finite being, and thence, capable of advancement in knowledge, in excel-

lence, in perfection, and happiness. The goodness therefore of such a being, great as it may be, is nevertheless limited; for wanting self-sufficiency, he cannot be perfectly disinterested. Two different motives will, by turns, overrule the determinations of his will; his own advantage, or that of others; and whenever these shall be found in opposition, it is natural that the balance of his will should preponderate in favour of his own interest. Nay, more; whenever such a being is called upon generously to forego his own immediate advantage, he needs the encouraging promise of a future glorious reward to animate him to the noble sacrifice. So true is it, that created beings are, in some degree, indigent, and can never entirely divest themselves of a desire to promote their self-happiness.

But it cannot be thus with God; a Being perfectly independent, immutable, infinite; can never, in any single instance, be determined by motives of self-advantage, because, it would imply a contradiction to his nature to suppose such a Being had any thing to acquire. The motive, the only motive, by which the divine will can be influenced, is the happiness of his creatures: he alone possesses such supreme goodness; and therefore it was, that our Saviour declared, *there is none good but one, that is God.*

But in order to confirm the truth of our third consequence, that every act of the Divine Being, is an act of his goodness; let us have recourse to the authority of scripture, where we are told that "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." That "he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." And when St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, speaks of *the perfect will of God*, we are undoubtedly to understand, that all his acts are acts of goodness. It is also worthy of particular notice, that the same apostle, writing to the Ephesians, concerning the salvation declared by Jesus Christ, calls it *the good pleasure of* the divine *will;* and in his epistle to the Thessalonians the same is expressed, as, *the good pleasure of his goodness*, substituting the word *goodness* for *will*, because in effect, they are one and the same thing.

And now, that I have established this truth from reason and scripture, let us see the rich treasure it contains.

And let us first consider the proposition before us, i. e. *every act of the Divine Being.* If we consider his acts with respect to *time*, the proposition contains, actions past, present, and future; if with respect to place, it relates, not only to this earth and its inhabitants, but comprehends those innumerable worlds that fill the immensity of space, and all the beings that ever have, or ever will inhabit them: such is the extent of our third consequence, it comprehends *every act of the divine will, whether in time or in space.*

But let us advance a step farther, and see what those actions are of which God is the source. And here I shall perhaps surprise certain of my readers by asserting, that God is the Author of every action; all that is done throughout the universe, if not the immediate act of the Deity, is the immediate act of creatures animate, or inanimate, who compose the universe. Now these creatures being the work of God, absolutely depend on the power of their Creator for their existence and action; "for in him they live, move, and have their being;" neither could they, as our Saviour declared to Pilate, have any power, except it were given them from above. Thus every action of the creature is at the same time an action of the Creator. Creatures are the second causes, the Creator is the first cause of all. Second causes are instruments in the hands of the first, by which he accomplishes his eternal purposes; therefore every thing ultimately proceeds from the first cause: for "who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commanded it not? Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good? I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things."

But among the actions of second causes are found a multitude of sins and crimes, and can these be referred to the action of the first cause, without making God the author of sin? The difficulty arising from this objection will disappear if we attend to what has been said relative to the immediate actions of second causes, that they are at the same time, the actions of the creature, and of the Creator. Those actions in the creature, which are evil, are no farther sinful than as they partake of a corrupt will, and are opposed to the law of God: "for sin is the transgression of the law." But in as much as these actions belong to the first cause, they must proceed from a will the most excellent, and dispensations the most salutary: second causes become culpable before God by the wicked intentions which instigate their actions; while at the same time, they are the ignorant and undesigning instruments, by which the first cause executes the purposes of his eternal counsels.

But we will have recourse to some examples to shew the justice and truth of this distinction. The death of the Son of God is allowed by all, who call themselves Christians, to be the most atrocious crime, the most horrible act, that the malice and wickedness of second causes could ever invent; and yet this action, as far as it belongs to the first cause, is the greatest of blessings, the utmost display of benignity and love. When the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, it was against the Lord and against his Christ; but this opposition to the will of God, which was their sin, was in his hand the means of effecting whatsoever his counsel had determined before to be done.

We have another striking example in the history of Joseph; inasmuch as the cruel treatment he experienced was the action of his unnatural brothers, animated by hatred and envy, it was a crime of a black and detestable nature; but view it as it relates to the

First Cause, and it will appear, not only as the road to his elevation and prosperity, but as the salutary mean of preservation to a numerous and flourishing nation. This is the language of Joseph himself, who reasoning with his brethren, says, "as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good;" remarkable words these, by which we are authorized to affirm, that whatever the sinner intends as evil, the Divine Ruler of events *means unto good.*

The parable of the prodigal son offers us a third instance in confirmation of this truth. His demand of the portion that belonged to him, was the action of a libertine desirous to shake off the restraints of parental authority, and to give loose to every unruly passion; but the grant of his request by his father, was the excellent and salutary means of producing indigence and misery, and in consequence of these afflictions, conversion and amendment. Now we should do well to consider, that in this parable our Saviour represents the Supreme Being under the image of the father.

Thus we see the Deity presiding over the universe, governing and directing every action in time and in space; so that there is not an individual among intelligent beings who is not authorised to say; all that has ever befallen me, from the first moment of my existence to the present, is the work of God; nor can any event that may concern me hereafter, in time or in eternity, ever take place, without the concurrence of the first cause. Ah! since it is our happiness to be in possession of so delightful, so comforting a truth, let us never more confine our views with servile stupidity to second causes. In all that befalls us, whether good or evil, let us elevate our thoughts to the great First Cause; let us acquire this delightful habit, that whatever the changes of this passing scene may be, we may be ever ready to say with the acquiescence of true devotion; I will be dumb, and open not my mouth, because thou, O Lord, dost it.

If then, every event in time, and space, is the act of the First Cause, either directly or indirectly, by the medium of the creature; we know that infinite goodness produces and overrules every event, and therefore, that whatever befalls every creature in any period of time, or in any part of that immense space which compose the universe, is, with respect to each of them, the greatest possible good. And is not this the most delightful, the most sublime, the most interesting truth that can engage the attention, or animate the hopes of a creature? a truth as certain and necessary as the infinite goodness of God. How it brightens the face of nature! and decks the splendours of the universe, in the smiles of benignity! This delightful truth, as it relates not only to ourselves, but embraces every created intelligence, must fill all who are so happy as to possess it, with the most lively sentiments of confidence and joy. How happy am I to be assured, that every event that has befallen me, from the first moment of my existence to the present, as well as whatever will befall me throughout all eternity, is the greatest possible good that the infinite bounty of my Creator can bestow.

Such is the assurance, such the consequence arising from the knowledge of the infinite goodness of God. How much more truly valuable than any of those things which ignorance and folly seek with ardour, and of which vanity and presumption make their boast! For thus saith the Lord, by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah; "let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me; that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." May we not, henceforth *rejoice evermore, and in every thing give thanks.* Never let us be cast down by any events, even those which wear the most discouraging aspect; never *let us judge according to appearance;* but rather, by this great principle of which we are sure, that infinite goodness, enlightened by infinite wisdom, and seconded by infinite power, dispenses every event; and say with Job, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Let us not quit this interesting truth, till we have attended to two consequences, which are calculated to demonstrate its infinite importance.

And first, let us observe to how sublime and glorious a height this knowledge of God raises human nature, by comparing the state of a man destitute of this knowledge, with the state of him who possesses it. I mean to represent these opposite conditions in my own person, which every one may apply to himself with equal truth and propriety.

Destitute of the knowledge of God, what am I, but ignorance and blindness, encompassed on every side with thick darkness? Not only incapable of foreseeing future events, unable to boast myself of the morrow, not knowing what a day may bring forth, but ignorant of the judgment I ought to form of events when they have actually taken place. I know not when to rejoice, or when to be afflicted; because I cannot distinguish with certainty the good, or the evil. I rejoice to day at what yesterday afflicted me; and what now transports me with delight, may on the morrow fill me with affliction and distress. A hundred times have I been guilty of these mortifying mistakes; and were I not blessed with the knowledge of God, I should thus continue the deplorable and wretched sport of fortuitous events.

But no sooner am I instructed in the knowledge of God; no sooner do I behold the first cause of all, as a being possessed of infinite goodness, but darkness and chance exist no more for me; light surrounds my path, and tranquillity inhabits my breast. It is true that I do not perceive any more than before, how every event is calculated to produce the greatest good; because, such knowledge can alone belong to the Being who distinctly

views the immense chain of causes and effects; but I am not less persuaded that every event is the greatest possible benefit, because overruled by infinite goodness.

May I not say that in this treasure I possess *the pearl of great price*; and ought I not henceforth to esteem it as my riches, my joy, my consolation, and my happiness? I will no more *take thought for the morrow*; for the morrow did I say; no, not for the events of eternity. *None of these things* shall *move me*, but I will *cast all my care upon him who careth for me*, and is the dispenser of every event. And let what will befall me, I will raise my thoughts to the great First Cause, and be ready to say: O supreme and adorable Goodness, *Thou didst it*; it is thy choice, and can therefore be no other than my greatest good! Thus, whatever may be the present appearance of second causes, they will never be any other, in my sight, than instruments in the hand of Infinite Goodness; and I will courageously defy all the powers of nature; every creature in heaven and in earth, in time or in eternity, to be able to separate me from the divine love.

To me the glorious effects of the divine knowledge are such, as entirely to overcome my own ignorance and weakness, and extend my knowledge and power far beyond their natural bounds. I know not what is necessary to my happiness, but the infinite goodness of the First Cause knows it for me. I am, it is true, incapable of procuring the means essential to my felicity; but I know, that the power of the first cause is able to effect every thing which he sees suitable to my moral state, and conducive to my real happiness. When I consider the glorious, the delightful consequences which attend this knowledge of God, I feel the force of the eulogy contained in the ninth chapter of the prophesy of Jeremiah: "Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me; that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord."

I am now come to the second consideration resulting from the third consequence; and this is, that the scheme which divine wisdom has conceived for the government of moral agents, is the plan of infinite goodness. This goodness has assigned to man his final destination, and from the creation of the world to the present moment, is continually employed in the execution of this perfect plan; which it will never neglect, never abandon, in time or in eternity; but fully accomplish, to the praise and glory of the divine name. And could I ever have employed to better purpose, the time and talents thou hast bestowed upon me, O my God! than in attempting to develope this adorable plan of thine infinite goodness, according to the light thou hast vouchsafed me in nature and revelation? I will not be discouraged by the sublimity of the subject, though I know that I must sink infinitely below its majesty; for who can attain to the height of the divine counsels? Were I the most enlightened, the most eloquent among mortals; were I even to speak the language of angels; or, could I boast the nature of these celestial messengers, I should be confounded, and absorbed in the immense abyss.

Having demonstrated the truth, and unfolded the meaning of our third consequence, it is time that I should apply it to all those dreadful evils which we see in the world; and to the more terrible calamities which divine justice will inflict upon the wicked in a future state. What are we to think of these evils? What judgment are we to form concerning their existence? Assisted by the light of our proposition, I affirm with confidence, that under the government, and providence of an infinitely good being, all is constantly right, and that there does not, or ever will exist, any real evil in the universe.

However, when I assert that there exists no *real* evil, I am sensible it requires an explanation; which will be short and easy. *Evil*, considered *in itself*, is real, alas! but too real in this unconnected view. The various and dreadful crimes which compose the black catalogue of vice; the acuteness of pain, the horrors of indigence, the anguish of dissolution, are, no doubt, real evils, heavy calamities; to maintain the contrary, would be to the last degree absurd. But if we view each of these in their consequences and effects, we shall see that they are not real evils; because, the infinite goodness of God, who can derive good from evil, knows how to make them conspire to eternal happiness, to infinite good; so that the evils through which we must inevitably pass, being the necessary means of happiness, cannot be esteemed other than real good. Do we know that we are the creatures of God, whose destination is for immortality and happiness; and that in order to fit us for their enjoyment, he has placed us on this earth for a very little time, where "our days are as an hand's breadth, and our age as nothing" before that eternity which awaits us? We know this, and nevertheless derogating from the grandeur of our hopes, and confining our views to the present world; we consider the evils which assault us on every side, as they are in themselves, without extending our views farther. Should they by this means appear bitter and terrible calamities; should they leave us without consolation, destitute of courage, or strength to support them; how can we complain when we have given them their sting? In order to form a proper judgment of the evils of life, let us consider them as connected with their effects, and we shall agree to the proposition already laid down, as to a certain truth; that under the government and providence of a being infinitely good, every thing will be ultimately right, and that there neither

is, or ever can be, any real evil in the universe. But let us analyze this truth by applying it to moral and physical evil; the former of which comprehends every species of sin, and the latter every kind of suffering.

Let us begin by an inquiry into moral evil. Moral evil, or sin, considered in its own nature, is a great and terrible evil, because absolutely opposed to our happiness. Sin, is, in its nature, that will of the creature, which is contrary to the will of his Creator. Now every act of the divine will, being an act of infinite goodness, designed to conduct us to happiness; every will in man which is opposed to the will of God, must necessarily conduct to evil and misery; nor can the omnipotence of God himself, render a creature happy till this perverse and evil will is subdued. Such is the odious and horrible nature of sin, it places man in a state contrary to his nature, inasmuch as the desire of happiness is, as it were, a natural instinct, and the attainment of misery the inevitable consequence of sin. This seducer of our souls, leads us to reject the felicity offered us by our Creator; and to seek it where it is impossible ever to be found. And is not this *a war*, a cruel war *to our souls?* Nay, more: sin, as long as he maintains his dominion, is an implacable enemy; increasing, and continually aggravating the evil he does; fortifying our inordinate desires, and rendering their tyranny more and more imperious, by the force of habit. He inures us to his yoke till he makes us *drink iniquity like water.* Ah! might I ever hope that my expostulations would reach any of those unhappy votaries whom he leads captive at his will; I should tell them, from the love I bear to their immortal souls, that the accusations I have brought against sin, are not ended here, but that there yet remains a fatal truth to be told them, the inevitable consequence of their subjection to this monster: a truth which I consider as the most solemn, the most alarming that can ever strike the understanding of an intelligent being. And this is, the fatal tendency of sin to stifle in us all taste for virtue, and to lead us on to such a state of depravity and wickedness, that to do good is hateful to us; and when once we are arrived at this terrible degree of corruption, the conquest of sin over us is secure, for we are incapable of discerning "the things that belong to our peace; they are foolishness unto us, neither can we know them." And lastly, to complete the evil, sin deprives us of the only resource that could yet remain to extricate us from the gulph of misery in which we are plunged, by creating in us an aversion to truth. Truth, did we not fly from it, might discover to us our miserable condition, fill us with a lively and salutary horror, with a sincere and ardent desire of escaping it; and by its celestial ray "transform us by the renewing of our minds," till it had caused us to experience that *the will of God*, which by our sins we had dared to oppose, was indeed a good, an acceptable, and a perfect will. But sin, by the hatred which it inspires for truth, detains us in chains of darkness, and closes every avenue by which the light could find access to our hearts. It causes us to neglect and despise the means of instruction with which we are encompassed, and creates in us the most insurmountable obduracy of heart. Such is the dreadful nature of sin considered in itself.

If such then is its nature, may I not expect to be asked, why is it not an evil, an evil greater than can be expressed? and how I can maintain, that under the conduct of God all is right; and that there exists no real evil in the universe? How then! shall not sin be called a real evil? Is not that an evil which causes us to reject supreme happiness; which corrupts us till we become monsters of depravity and wickedness; which makes us so totally blind to our true interest, that we prefer darkness to light; and thus leads us to the most hardened obduracy? Ah! take heed, will such say, lest in treating this difficult and thorny question, you draw down on your own head, the woe denounced upon those *who call evil good.*

In answer to this objection I agree, that sin, *considered in its own nature*, is a greater evil than can ever be expressed. I acknowledge that it is impossible to exaggerate its turpitude; nor have I, in enumerating its malignant effects, in the least palliated its unhappy tendency, to produce the greatest pain and distress to whoever is infected with it. But nevertheless, a confidence arising from the most perfect certainty, enables me to repeat, that sin, considered in its consequences and effects, is not a real evil; and I hope not to quit this subject till I have made this clearly appear.

If sin, or moral evil, was to reign forever in the heart of man, I should be the last to affirm that it was not a real evil. On the contrary, I should never have engaged in my present design; nor have attempted to unfold a scheme, of which the bare idea would make me tremble. For, if we grant the eternal duration of sin, we must determine it to be an infinite evil, whether considered in its nature, or in its effects. Upon this supposition, what is its nature but the eternal revolt of sinners against God, and their eternal progress in wickedness? Considered in its consequences and effects, it would be the eternal source of the greatest misery. Let us not dwell on a supposition equally opposed to the nature of a being perfectly good, and to that of creatures *made after his image;* but consider moral evil in its true light; view it as finite in duration; as an enemy, which will sooner or later be vanquished in every heart. When the Supreme Being created man for happiness, he certainly knew how far sin would prove the obstacle of this felicity: he knew that our whole race would become its slaves, in a greater or less degree, and incapable of extricating themselves from its unhappy influence: but the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God; and therefore a Being perfectly good, knew by what means

he could accomplish the destruction of sin in every heart: this is the object of all the divine dispensations, in nature and revelation; the great end which the wisdom of God proposes in his providential government: this was the work which the Redeemer of the world was sent to accomplish, when he came to save us from our sins.

The means by which this change is to be effected, will no doubt, be painful, though absolutely necessary, and finally efficacious; for moral evil must be subdued by physical evil, by the miseries and sufferings inflicted on the sinner here; and by the far more terrible, and more durable agonies of an unhappy hereafter; so that physical evil can never be terminated till it has accomplished the entire extinction of moral evil. This I have proved already in treating of the infinite justice of the Supreme Being, where I considered all suffering, present, and future, as chastisements inflicted "for our profit, that we might be made partakers of the divine holiness." When these shall have produced their effect, and the enemy of happiness is subdued in every heart; when infinite goodness shall thus have made mankind wise and virtuous, and reduced their wills to a perfect conformity to his; then, and not till then, will the current of his mercy flow in an uninterrupted course; then will the Creator and Redeemer of mankind open to them the inexhaustible treasures of felicity and glory; then will every difficulty disappear, and the adorable goodness of the Lord shine in full splendour, every heart will exult with joy and gratitude, and every tongue will be tuned to praise, thankful for those very sufferings which have worked "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." This is the period, the glorious and certain period, to which we must direct our thoughts, if we would form just ideas of the nature of evil; which however great, is not absolute, since it leads to real and infinite good.

I know of but one cloud that may shade the lustre of this truth, to some of my readers: but as to them it may appear impenetrable, I must state the difficulty, and endeavour to obviate it. It is this: If we allow the Creator to be as infinitely powerful, as he is perfectly good; why did he not make all his creatures wise and good, virtuous and holy, from the commencement of their existence? Why did he not appoint their perfection and felicity, to be coeval with their being, and exclude every kind of evil, by forming them in that state of perfection which their natures are capable of attaining?

I admit that this ideal system is pleasing to the imagination; that it represents a world far different from that which we inhabit; a world where sin and disorder, suffering and affliction, would find no entrance; and where the torments prefigured under the *wrath to come*, would never alarm; because, those also would be absolutely useless.

But this, alas! is only a dream, delightful if you will, but existing only in our imagination, and absolutely contradicted by facts. Moral, and physical evil actually do exist; and frail mortals are sinful and unhappy. Such is the fact. This earth, peopled by a succession of beings in the infancy of their existence, is peopled also by ignorant and sinful mortals; it is filled with their disorders and miseries; with their crimes and sufferings: such is the fact; evil exists, and yet it appears to us, that it were far better it had never been. How are we then to escape from such a labyrinth?

Before we enter on the solution of this difficulty, let us reflect for a moment who, and what we are, who thus arraign the works of the Almighty. Alas! are we not weak, ignorant, short-sighted mortals; creatures of yesterday, inhabiting a small speck in the immense universe? Let us therefore take heed when we ask of God, *why he has made us thus?* lest the question should proceed from a criticising and rebellious spirit. But should it on the contrary arise from a desire of information, and a thirst after truth, it will not then be reprehensible, or offensive to the fountain of all truth; *for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to come at the knowledge of the truth.* With these laudable sentiments, let us therefore inquire, *why the Divine Being did not create us at first, as perfect, and as holy as we shall be, when we are arrived at the mansions of bliss?*

I might in the first place answer, that were we perfectly acquainted with human nature, we should perhaps discern that holiness, from *influx*, is an impossible and chimerical idea; because, perfect holiness, being the moral perfection of our wills, necessarily supposes the perfection of our understanding, and consequently the development of our faculties; the accumulation of light and knowledge, acquired by their exercise: that while we are thus acquiring knowledge by experience, the freedom of our wills, which constitute us accountable beings, will leave us liable to wander from the right way; and that during such deviations, we may become corrupted and depraved by the force of habit. In a word, had we a perfect knowledge of human nature, it is probable we should perceive that though man is by his nature, capable of attaining to a holiness, comparatively perfect, it must become his own by the exercise of his faculties, which renders him liable to moral evil; and to physical evil, which is its necessary remedy.

But though we possess presumptive evidence of all this, yet I decline grounding my answer upon probability: I have therefore only glanced at these reflections to shew, that to be able to form a right judgment, and ascertain the possibility, or impossibility of the question before us; we ought to be endowed with a perfect knowledge of human nature. Let these reflections produce in our hearts sentiments of diffidence and respect, when we speak of Him, *whose ways are in the*

deep; the Father of light, before whom we are darkness.

But let us quit the path of doubt and uncertainty, and give a decisive answer to the question: why the Divine Being did not create us at first as perfect, and as holy, as we shall be, when we arrive at the mansions of bliss.

The fact then is, as the question supposes, that the Creator has not acted thus; that in forming this world he has not excluded moral and physical evil. This is sufficient for me, it is all I require, to be perfectly assured that this exclusion was impossible; or in other words, that moral and physical evil were the natural consequences of that freedom of will necessary to beings in a state of probation, and improvement. We may therefore say, that the total exclusion of evil, was not an object for the Divine Omnipotence to exercise itself upon; because God cannot contradict himself. *Every act of God is an act of infinite goodness*; it was perfect goodness created the world, and permitted the entrance of all the evils we deplore. Now Divine Goodness can only be called infinite or perfect, because it makes the best choice, and produces the greatest good. We may therefore be assured that this world, formed as it is, is best adapted to the end; an end most perfect and excellent; and that it was not possible to create us in the beginning as holy and perfect as we shall be hereafter. Had it been possible, or, which is the same thing with God, had it been fit and right, infinite Wisdom and Goodness would not have acted otherwise.

We may now admit as a truth, what we have just advanced on the footing of probability; that *holiness from influx*, is impossible; because destructive of moral agency, which both supposes, and requires, a state of schooling, preparative to one of perfection and felicity.

Let us therefore acknowledge that these finite evils are not real evils; because by their means mankind are raised to supreme and universal happiness; and therefore, that under the government and providence of a being infinitely good, every thing will be ultimately right, and that there neither is, or ever can exist any real evil in the universe.

In applying this our third consequence, to the various evils we see in the world, I have given the only satisfactory answer to the celebrated question, respecting the *origin of evil*, which has always been considered as difficult and embarrassing; and exercised at different times, the greatest geniuses, both ancient and modern. In all I have ever read on this subject, I have seen the *infinite* duration of evil granted; whence it became impossible to solve the difficulty; for who can reconcile infinite evil with infinite goodness, infinite cruelty with infinite love? But though these contradictions cannot be conciliated, we shall find no difficulty in conceiving the admission of finite evil, when it is a mean by which creatures may be raised to the perfection of which their natures are susceptible, and made fit for the enjoyment of complete happiness. This is the only kind of evil, which a being perfectly good can ever admit into his plan; and the only satisfactory method of accounting for its existence.

Various, no doubt, have been the answers to this thorny question; and one of the most plausible, in order to justify the goodness of God in inflicting never-ending torments on the reprobate, is by supposing *those eternal sufferings necessary, to procure the eternal happiness, not barely of the elect*, but as one world is connected with another, in the immense system; *of a multitude of other creatures*. This solution has been received with avidity by numbers who sincerely sought the truth; but whose minds were prepossessed by the supposition of the endless duration of torments, so as never to entertain a doubt on the subject. A belief so opposed to the divine goodness, throws the mind into a restless and uneasy state, from whence it eagerly desires an escape, and hopes to have effected, in the above solution; which makes the infinite misery of some, conducive to the infinite happiness of others. They would not certainly be deceived by such an argument, did they not rejoice to find some valuable end answered by the sufferings of the reprobate; and in this idea of felicity, imagine they see the traces of the infinite goodness of their Creator. If they cannot entirely divest themselves of the feelings of pity and compassion, for the many victims thus devoted to eternal misery, they endeavour to lessen the uneasy sensation by reflecting, that such have brought it on themselves, by an obstinate resistance to the grace of God. Besides, it may be urged, is not the felicity and glory of an innumerable multitude of intelligences, resulting from this evil, an ample compensation for the eternal perdition of these wilful sinners? And with this wretched solution, do men content themselves.

To neglect nothing on a subject of such importance, I must briefly examine this pretended solution; the strange method of felicity it presents, in making the infinite misery of some, a necessary mean of happiness to others. Among a multitude of objections I could find to this horrid method of procuring felicity, which presents on all sides the most evident contradictions; I shall confine myself to proving, that this method of proceeding would be with respect to the reprobate, unjust, and cruel; and with respect to the blessed subversive of its end.

To render a multitude of intelligent beings eternally happy, is an object so sublime and excellent, that we may esteem it worthy of the most exalted ideas we can form of infinite wisdom, and goodness; provided however that the means necessary to their perfection and felicity, are the gift of God, in consequence of their having improved the faculties with which he has endowed them, and the means of grace and salvation he has [illegible] ed them by his gospel. But to re[illegible] tures happy, their numbers ever [illegible] *constant joy*

the infliction of eternal misery on the reprobate, would be a method most unjust, and cruel. Let us not assert by way of justification, that the reprobate have deserved the unremitting torments they endure; for if, as some say, the fault is their own, I ask whether existence was their fault also? was it not the Lord that made them, and not they themselves? Is it not true, that they were not culpable prior to their existence, and could not then deserve any suffering? And can we deny, that the divine mind was perfectly acquainted with the use they would make of existence; that it would never be other than a state of suffering and misery? Is it not true that existence bestowed on such terms is to the creature, an infinite evil? And that the irresistible fiat which brought them into being, was the greatest evil that could possibly befall them; and this at a time when they could have no demerit, but were perfectly innocent? I leave every candid mind to determine how an irresistible act which produces infinite evil, to innocent beings, is to be qualified; if it is not an act sovereignly unjust and barbarous? We may therefore infer with certainty, that a being perfectly good will never adopt such a method into his plan.

Let us now consider this pretended means of felicity to the blessed: and shew, that as far as it concerns their happiness, it is a mean destructive of its end.

It is not an easy thing to conceive, how the infinite misery of the reprobate can be a mean, and a necessary mean, of happiness to the blessed. Can we suppose that intelligent creatures capable by their nature of perfection and felicity, would be unable to attain to this glorious destination, unless at the same time a number of intelligent beings existed in eternal misery? Among creatures of the same nature, thence capable of the same happiness; must a part be made happy at the expense of a considerable portion devoted to endless misery and despair? Cannot a being infinitely perfect and happy communicate beatitude to its intelligent offspring on other and more favourable terms? Can he not be to some the inexhaustible source of happiness; unless he is to others, the never-failing source of misery? But let us cease to heap contradiction on contradiction, horror upon horror, and end this disagreeable discussion, by shewing that the eternal misery of the reprobate, instead of being a necessary mean of happiness to the blessed, would on the contrary poison and destroy their felicity, and prove subversive of its end.

In the first place, it would poison the felicity of the blessed. The inhabitants of heaven could not be happy unless penetrated with the most ardent charity for their fellow creatures; for St. Paul tells us that without charity we are nothing. In this respect therefore, as well as in many others, the blessed would be unlike the angels of God in heaven; But this, compassionate spirits, who interest in the conversion and salvation of sinful mortals; insomuch that there is joy amongst them over one sinner that repented. It would therefore be impossible that the righteous in glory, fired with celestial charity, should taste the joys of paradise while they knew that a great number of fellow beings, were the prey of never ending torments. They must necessarily and ardently wish for the deliverance, and salvation of these unhappy beings; and at the same time be convinced that this ardent and eternal desire of their hearts would never be satisfied, so that their charity would be the source of their misery; a never dying worm in the breast which would render them unhappy in the mansions of bliss. O divine charity! thou greatest, most sublime, most godlike of virtues; thou who art the glory and excellence of intelligent creatures, and alone can make them partakers of the divine nature, art thou destined to become the torment of the just in heaven?

But how much more painful still would it be to the righteous to know; that these eternal sufferings, destitute of any valuable purpose to the culpable individual, were necessary means of procuring their happiness. Would not every possibility of enjoyment vanish, at the idea of possessing it at the expense of these deplorable victims of distress. The best characters here below are, alas! very far from having acquired that seraphic charity which will animate the spirits of the blessed; for while here, we are in our best estate, as our Saviour declares in the seventh chapter of St. Matthew, *evil;* and yet with the feeble spark of charity I possess, and I doubt not but every one of my readers can join in the sentiment, I had rather never have existed, than be assured that the eternal happiness designed me, was the result of the eternal sufferings not of a multitude, but of an individual creature. Existence is not necessary; but if once I exist I must desire happiness. And what felicity, O God! must that be which is founded upon, or even increased by the misery of others! Do we not perceive such a mean destructive of its end?

I add in the second place, *that it would entirely destroy the happiness of the righteous.* Charity consists in constantly placing ourselves in the situation of others; upon this principle, what must the feelings of the just be? surely of a nature quite opposed to happiness. What would they discover in their Maker? Not infinite, disinterested, adorable goodness, but a partial and imperfec consequently a doubtful and uncerta volence; if that title is any way appli a disposition compatible with injust cruelty. What a deplorable change o supposition make in the happiness of h sin might indeed be for ever excluded, sorrow would find an entrance; and that p fect admiration, that entire confidence; tha celestial love for the greatest and best of beings, which must unite the souls of the just to their sovereign good; would be poisoned in its source. No, fulness of joy must reside

in his presence, and at his right hand pleasures for evermore. Pardon, O my God! Thou most perfectly good and merciful being, who art the substance of all that excellence, of which we frail and sinful beings can discern but the shadow; forgive I beseech thee! if but for a moment, I am led to speak of thee, not as thou art, and as thou ever will shew thyself to all thy creatures; but such as the prejudices and passions of men would make thee appear!

Thus we see that the eternal misery of the wicked, cannot contribute to the felicity of the righteous; it would be both unjust and cruel, and even destructive of its end; consequently can never be adopted into the plan of a perfectly good and wise being.

Thus am I come to the conclusion of my third consequence from the infinite goodness of God, *that all his acts are acts of goodness.* I have established its truth, I have demonstrated its extent, and have shewn that the Supreme Governor of the universe, presides over and directs every event to ultimate good; therefore that whatever may befall his creatures in time, or in eternity, proceeds from infinite goodness in the First Cause, and is to each of them the greatest possible good. I have applied this to the present, and future evil; and have demonstrated that under the government and providence of an all perfect Being, every thing is ultimately right, and that in His universe, no real evil can exist; which has led me to examine the celebrated question of the origin of moral evil, to which I hope I have given a satisfactory reply.

By the aid of this solution, we may affirm, that all the evils the Divine Being dispenses to his creatures, whether here, or hereafter, proceed from his infinite goodness; or in other words, that it is impossible he should ever dispense any evil in this world, or in the world to come, which is not even to the individuals, an actual exercise of perfect goodness.

SECT. II.

Practical consequences to be derived from the infinite goodness of God.

The *practical*, or *moral* consequences arising from the infinite goodness of God; are the various sentiments naturally produced in the [illegible] by the knowledge of this supreme good- [illegible] where the understanding is thoroughly [illegible] ced of its truth. And though their [illegible] ration is in some measure foreign to a [illegible] particularly dedicated to the theory of [illegible] on, I nevertheless proposed admitting [illegible] n into my plan from a conviction of their [illegible] treme importance and tendency to render us wise, good, perfect and happy.

These important and valuable effects, are reducible to three heads; as they relate to ourselves, to the Divine Being, and to our fellow creatures; such as internal joy, love of God, and charity to our neighbour. I shall therefore observe by way of fourth consequence that *the infinite goodness of God is the only solid foundation of prevailing and continual joy.*

I know that he who made me, is a being perfectly good, a Father whose love is infinite, and who by an effect of that love gave me existence, that I might obtain happiness; to proclaim and accomplish which, he has sent his Son from heaven and delivered him up to sufferings and death; and with this precious gift, does he not *give me all things?* His laws, his dispensations, his blessings, his chastisements, in a word every event that befalls me, tends to promote this great end; and to assure me, that this perfectly good being, will confer upon me to all eternity all possible good. What perfect joy may now take possession of my heart! I may "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!" I may prize the precious gift of life, since I exist by the good pleasure of my faithful Creator; and for a blessed eternity! during which I shall never cease to be the happy object of his care and love! and is not this a subject for prevailing and continual joy?

It is the subject of *prevailing* joy, as it fills and occupies my whole heart; sorrow and affliction, under what form soever they may assault me, must fly before it; for what are they when compared with so sincere, so permanent a joy? The contemplation of the being perfectly good, shall put a gladness into my heart, a balm of consolation and support, which all the evils of time shall in vain attempt to destroy: for in these evils, I behold the chastening of parental kindness improving my moral nature; and consider them therefore as *real benefits;* since by their means I shall one day arrive at perfection and happiness. The farther effects of this prevailing joy, are *perfect contentment* in every situation and condition of life; *patience under affliction*, and a degree of *courage and strength* which makes me rise superior to every trial, "and more than conqueror through Him that has loved me."

I have also said in the second place, that the knowledge of the infinite extent of divine goodness, gives rise to *continual* joy. If I never lose sight of a being constantly employed in promoting my happiness; if I call to mind his benefits "when sitting in my house and when walking by the way, when I lie down and when I rise up," can sorrow ever penetrate my heart, or affliction dispel the transporting delight arising from an assurance of the paternal love of my Creator? If I set the Lord always before me, if I thus habituate my mind to his presence which is fulness of joy; if his adorable goodness is the first object that employs my waking thoughts; may I not hope from such contemplation that serenity and peace, contentment and joy will accompany me through the day? "O Lord satisfy me early with thy mercy; that I may rejoice and be glad all my days."

Such is the *prevailing*, the *constant joy*

produced by the knowledge of the infinite goodness of God, which can never abandon us in life, or in death; the source of present, as well as future happiness; and the *only permanent foundation* on which to build our hope. Eternity without this, affords a dreary and uncertain prospect, more calculated to raise anxiety, and apprehension, than to excite satisfaction and joy. To escape from those horrors, which await so many of my fellow beings, would afford me little joy; for with a nature more charitable and perfect than what I now possess, what terror and amazement must the infinite sufferings of the wicked excite in my compassionate and benevolent mind? What an influence has this idea on my best expectations; how it damps the joys of immortality!

But forever let we adore and bless the Father of mercies, who has given me such unquestionable evidence of his almighty goodness, by which I know that the immortality for which he has caused me to exist, is a truly precious and valuable gift of his infinite love; "and that he is able to do for me, exceeding and abundantly above all that I can ask or think."

Is there not then, let me ask, sufficient reason for joy in the infinite goodness of God? To you, whose happiness it is to possess this knowledge I particularly address myself. You I exhort "to rejoice in hope, to be patient in tribulation, to continue instant in prayer; to rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say to rejoice;" for you possess in the infinite goodness of God, the only solid foundation of prevailing, and continual joy.

Our fifth consequence is designed to shew, *That the infinite goodness of God, is the only foundation of our supreme love to him.*

Love to God, is one of the most positive precepts in the gospel; it is distinguished "as the first, and great command;" insisted upon in terms the most energetic, as a supreme affection that must fill every capacity of the soul: "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy thought, and with all thy strength."

To form a right judgment of this *great command*, I must begin by distinguishing the precepts of scripture, as they relate either to the injunction of external actions, or to the sentiments of the heart. The observance of the former depends upon my will. For however great my repugnance to an external action may be, nevertheless it is in my power to obey. But it is not thus with relation to those precepts which are designed for the government of my internal sentiments; these are not equally at my disposal, nor do they depend on my will; I cannot therefore from obedience to any command, be joyful when I am sad, or afflicted, when I have cause to rejoice; I cannot love what I hate, or hate what I love; and thence arises that proverbial expression, *that our sentiments are not at our command.*

But if the sentiments of our hearts are not to be controlled by our wills; whence is it, let be ask, that the divine word abounds with precepts for their regulation; not only relative to our love to God, but to our self-denial, our detachment from the world, our humility, patience, charity; our love of our enemies, and forgiveness of injuries? are not these sentiments of the heart, and do not the divine laws extend to them?

The discussion of this question, will lead me to a short digression *on the divine laws*, which as it is not foreign to my principal subject, will I trust be no ways unacceptable to my readers.

Human laws, cannot penetrate beyond external actions; but the laws of God must go farther, and regulate the sentiments of the heart; so that we may affirm, that the divine commands are directed to our internal actions; since the sentiments which lead us to obedience, can alone give it any value in the sight of God. Scripture commands us to give alms; but tells us also "that though we bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and give our bodies to be burned, and have not charity, it will profit us nothing:" accordingly our Lord has declared, "that a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things: for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications," and all those crimes that spread terror and desolation over the earth.

Such are the divine laws; and their design to regulate our hearts, clearly points out the grandeur of the destination to which we are called. Our Supreme Law-giver requires us to resemble him in perfection and felicity: this is the glorious rank to which he will elevate us, but which he knows we cannot attain, till our hearts are replete with pious and charitable sentiments: it is therefore *that the Lord looketh on the heart*, and by his precepts directs and governs our inmost sentiments.

To *try the heart and the reins*, is a truly divine prerogative, which can only belong to the being who formed us. He knows how to purify our hearts, by enlightening our understandings. He gives us in his word both instructions and promises; that by the *obedience of faith our hearts may be sanctified*; enjoining upon us at the same time the cultivation of such sentiments as the light he has given us, is calculated to produce. Thus for instance, when he sets life and a blessed immortality before us, he bids *us to rejoice evermore.* Again, he displays himself to us under most affecting characters of love and goodness; and then commands us *to love him with all our hearts.* Ah! let us then be persuaded, when we feel not the dispositions and sentiments which the Divine Being has made both our duty and our interest; let us be assured, that the fault is our own; that we have neglected to nourish our souls with the bread of life; that we have not sufficiently attended to the sublime truths, to the magnificent objects his word sets before us; and which, were they

frequently presented to our minds, could not fail of raising them far above the world, producing in us the most delightful sentiments of peace, of joy, and of love.

It does not certainly depend upon ourselves to adopt these sentiments by an instantaneous act of the will, in the manner we perform any external act of obedience: and in this sense alone it is true, *that our sentiments are not under our command.* But it is in our power to acquire the dispositions God requires of us; to excite them in our hearts; and to cherish and strengthen them more and more, by reading and meditating on his word, with assiduous and constant attention. Let us daily have recourse to the divine instruction contained in the gospel; where the Son of God himself points out the "things which belong to our peace." This sacred volume is to sincere Christians, "the bread of God which came down from heaven to give life to the soul;" a new and spiritual life, an "eternal life abiding in us." It presents to our contemplation two interesting objects. God our Heavenly Father, and a celestial immortality. And if it is certain that our minds are formed for *knowledge*, and our souls for *love;* how are these sacred pages which contain the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ our Lord, adapted to these ends; according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Mankind when they disregard the word of God, do not surely attend to the extreme folly and criminality of their neglect. Has the Being of Beings condescended to send his Son upon earth, to enlighten our darkness, to instruct us in his will, to publish life, and immortality, and shew us the road to happiness: has this precious and wonderful light been transmitted to us in his gospel; has he destined us "to be born again of uncorruptible seed by his word which liveth and abideth forever;" and shall we suffer our lives to wear away without making any use of it: and while every other book is familiar to us, remain strangers to this sacred volume and immersed in worldly concerns, as though our residence here, were to last forever? How many professing Christians are guilty of this shameful, this foolish neglect! Were it possible that we could desire to be our own enemies, could we take a surer method of success, than with wanton levity to disregard those powerful succours of grace, under which we live? Nay more, were it possible for us to desire to set the Almighty at defiance, could we pursue a more efficacious method, than in thus abusing, perhaps throughout the course of our lives, the precious gifts he has vouchsafed us, neglecting and despising his offered assistance; and treating alike with the disdain of contemptuous forgetfulness, his commands, his promises, and his threatenings? But *God is not mocked*, nor can we elude the execution of his immutable designs. If we refuse to be enlightened by his word, he will have recourse to the severities of his wrath, to overcome our obstinate resistance; for thus saith the Lord by the mouth of his prophet Isaiah, "the word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." How heavy will be the accusation of such hereafter, who have been guilty of this contemptuous and criminal neglect of the divine word!

I rejoice that the digression on which I entered, furnished me with an opportunity of exhorting my fellow Christians to avoid this common, this alarming, and fatal evil.

Let us return to our subject. Since the being who made us, commands us to love him with all the powers he has given us; his nature must be such as naturally to produce this supreme love; St. John founds it upon his goodness, when he says, "we love him, because he first loved us." That infinite goodness, is therefore *the only solid foundation of supreme love;* I shall now proceed to explain.

In this perfect goodness, I discover three reasons productive of my entire love. The first consists *in the benefits I have hitherto experienced*, which excite *my grateful love.* The second arises *from the promised blessings of eternity*; which produce *a love founded on interest.* The third, results from that infinite goodness which resides in the Deity, and which constitute him the object of my utmost admiration, *and most perfect filial attachment.*

The first reason on which I found my love for the Supreme Being, is that of *gratitude for benefits received.* What are these benefits? Alas! when they are more in number than sand on the sea shore, how can I attempt to enumerate them! Ten thousand have escaped my recollection from my weakness, and alas! ten thousand times ten thousand from my stupidity or inattention. But this I know, that from the first moment of my existence to the present; the goodness of God has not ceased to accompany me, and to bestow upon me every suitable benefit. Let me seek to place them under different classes, that thus I may taste *that the Lord is good*, or in other words, that I may love him for the multitude of his mercies.

Creation is the first of his benefits. Self-existent, necessary, and infinite, in every perfection, the Divine Being could have no need of me, nor would his power have produced me, had he not designed to manifest his love towards me. The life I have received, comprehends the wonderful and admirable structure of my body, and its various organs, or inlets to the mind. Also, that *living soul*, with all its admirable faculties, whose excellence as far exceeds that of the body, as life is superior to death; the inhabitant to the habitation: it comprehends the *senses* I possess, by which I am enabled to behold, and to enjoy the works of nature: *imagination*, which enlarges the boundaries of those senses and extends my existence to various periods and different parts of the world: *memory*, by whose assistance I call back a numerous

train of objects; and which is the receptacle of my acquired ideas: *reflection and understanding* to combine and perfect those ideas: lastly, *reason* or *intelligence* by which I am enabled to discover truth, increase my store of knowledge, and elevate my mind to the sublime contemplation of my Creator: it comprehends that *sensibility of heart* to which some have given the appellation of *moral sense*, which naturally inclines the mind to love, and pursue good, as far as it can trace it; and above all to love God as its supreme good. By all these faculties which are the gift of God, he has made me susceptible of pleasure and joy; and capable of an ever increasing felicity. To sum up all in a word, *he has made me after his own image:* my intellectual nature conformable to his, by a capacity of *becoming a partaker in the divine nature*, by holiness, perfection, and happiness. What excellence, what dignity then has he bestowed upon me; for as St. Paul says, *am I not also his offspring?* is he not my father; am I not his child, and does not this creative act of his will, give me the most solemn and sacred pledge of his immutable love and goodness? for he is a faithful Creator, who will not abandon the work of his hands.

How various, how extensive then, are the benefits resulting from creation! Existence, *a body fearfully and wonderfully made!* An intellectual soul, capable of knowing, loving, and resembling its Maker! and a pledge and assurance that infinite goodness will never forsake his creatures. "Bless the Lord then, O my soul, and let all that is within me, bless his holy name!"

After enumerating the blessings of creation, I may rank under the second class, *those of Providence.* And what is providence? With relation to me, it is *the continual care with which divine goodness has watched over my body and soul.*

Have I ever been forgotten or neglected for a single instant amidst the immensity of the works of God? Has not his wisdom in every varying circumstance, constantly provided and dispensed, that which was fittest and best for me?

My body, which at first was an imperceptible atom, must have perished in its germ, had not divine providence perfected and sustained it. Those who are most conversant with the human frame, most acquainted with its developments, and revolutions; know the amazing care, the wonderful wisdom requisite to bring it to perfection. "I will praise Thee, O Lord, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret; and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth: thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, when as yet there were none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! if I would count them, they are more in number than the sand."

Since I have been arrived at a state of maturity, how many are the blessings I have enjoyed? Has not the earth brought forth her increase, and been constantly covered with an astonishing profusion and variety of blessings? How manifold are those arising from the arts and sciences, and from the industry of men! and amidst the general comforts of social life; how many private blessings have I experienced in my particular calling!

But I have also said, that the providence of God, constantly watches over and supplies the wants of my soul. When my eyes first opened upon the light, I possessed a living soul; but that soul was in its lowest state. It contained the essence of all its future faculties, but torpid, inactive, destitute of a single idea, of any knowledge whatever, scarce sensible of existence; how deplorable would have been its condition, had it not been upheld by the hand that made it! When I compare my present state with the first dawn of reason, I behold in the progress and improvement of my faculties, a subject of gratitude and praise; for however slow, however imperceptible have been my advances, yet in every step I have made towards perfection, I have experienced the blessing of Providence in affording helps and means to those superior faculties, which are destined hereafter to become the sources of my perfection, and felicity. Destitute of such means and assistance, my soul must have remained in a state little better than that of the brutes. It is therefore to the goodness of God, and to his watchful providence, that I owe all these mercies.

But this is not all; greater benefits remain yet to be told; for while my animal powers were acquiring strength and maturity, and my intellectual and rational faculties improving; sin, that destroyer of my perfection and happiness, has manifested itself. The lively impressions made by external objects on my senses, and imagination, have excited in my soul a perverse will, together with violent and unruly passions, which soon becoming habitual, would have totally corrupted my soul with vices alike odious and fatal; had not the paternal care of divine Providence attached to sin, a restraint calculated to suppress its depredations.

And what is this salutary restraint capable of stopping the ravages of sin? It is *death, which has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;* it is also *all the numerous evils attendant upon a state of mortality*, by which infinite wisdom checks the progress of sin, and provides its necessary remedy. Physical evil, or sufferings, he has attached to sin, and made its wages death, to stem the torrent of moral evil. Had my soul been united to an *immortal* body, and this world my lasting residence, I had been lost. My passions would have become ungovernable, and reduced me to the horrible slavery of vice. But the wisdom of my Creator has prevented this evil, by connecting *sorrow and death with this infant state of being*, and thereby made it a state of

education. Placed as I am here, a stranger and a pilgrim; uncertain of sojourning another day; every object is transitory to me, and "all is vanity." Is not this calculated to repel the force of my passions, and to excite my desires after permanent life, and solid good? But lest this should be insufficient, the evils I experience from without, and from within, damp the ardour of my passions, suspend their career, give me time for recollection, that reason and reflection may find entrance into my mind, and incline me to "seek the Lord, if haply I might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."

But though the means of which I have been speaking, are absolutely necessary, to remedy the evil of sin; they are nevertheless insufficient for our salvation. God has therefore in his mercy given to us the assistance of his written word, made his laws the rule of our conduct, and his redemption by Jesus Christ, the foundation of our hope. This revelation, absolutely necessary to the human race, will no doubt, one day become universal. In the mean time, since by the grace of God we are blessed with its light; let us make a proper improvement of our privilege, and not waste our time in inquiring, why so great a portion of mankind are deprived of its advantages, certain as we may be, that their merciful Creator, loves them as their eternal Father; and that he will enlighten and save them, in the time and manner, which his wisdom sees most proper. I shall therefore continue to recapitulate the blessings of Providence towards me, which every Christian reader may apply to himself upon the same foundation.

To the blessings I have received in the ordinary course of Providence, I must add those of a superior order, which I owe to that wonderful economy of grace, under which it has been my happiness to be born. Hitherto I have confined my views to the *natural benefits* of creation and providence; I will now consider such as *are superadded to nature.*

I shall rank under a third class, the *blessing of redemption.* Redemption is the gift which God has bestowed upon me in his Son, in order to my salvation. And here two sublime objects offer themselves to my consideration; the salvation to which I am called, and the gift of the only begotten Son of God who has brought the glad tidings of peace; and is become the captain of our salvation to lead us all to happiness.

I refer my reader for a full discussion of this subject to the preceding chapter; where it has been treated, in order to draw two proofs concerning the infinite goodness of God. I shall therefore confine myself to some detached observations on the unspeakable benefit of redemption.

In the first place, it was a gift prepared for me many ages before it took place, and preceded my birth more than seventeen centuries. May I not say that divine goodness loved me prior to my existence; since long before it took place he gave his Son for me, and thereby executed "the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord?"

This gift is called *redemption*, because it is the *price*, or *ransom* by which *deliverance* and *salvation* were procured. What a ransom! the Son of God, *only begotten and well-beloved*, in whom the *Father* was *well pleased;* a being perfect and excellent, "was delivered up to death, even to the death of the cross; was numbered with transgressors," and experienced the ignominy and cruelty, of a shameful and agonizing death. How astonishing, how incomprehensible is the love of God to sinners! it *surpasseth knowledge:* must it not then infinitely surpass the powers of expression? and can the utmost efforts of a creature to celebrate the goodness of the Lord, ever exaggerate its inconceivable magnitude?

On me, an unworthy, miserable sinner, degraded, and dishonoured by my departure from God, in a state of actual rebellion against him, whose laws I had violated, and whose image I had effaced in my soul; on me, and on a race of beings like me unworthy; was this precious gift bestowed: he considered not my *demerit*, but he saw my *misery;* and had compassion on it.

It is not for mortal man to penetrate into the depth of the divine counsels; but in the death of the Son of God, I discern two important things, of which it was necessary I should have the clearest assurance. The first of these *is salvation:* and the second, *the way to attain it.* This *is the life, the immortality brought to light by the gospel;* by whose assistance I am enabled *to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live soberly, righteously and godly, in the present world;* where I must walk by faith, in those magnificent and gracious promises, which are confirmed by the death, the resurrection, and ascension of my compassionate and glorious Redeemer.

It does not become us to inquire, why no other than this sacred and holy being was sufficient to accomplish this great work. For since the adorable goodness of the Father has bestowed upon us his excellent and beloved Son; we may be assured, that no inferior nature was capable of accomplishing the important task. Was ever charity like thine, merciful Saviour! *who loved us and gave thyself for us!*

This work of redemption, is the utmost extent of divine love. It is thus represented by the Supreme Being himself, who makes it as it were the criterion of his willingness to confer upon us, whatever else may be needful for our happiness. If his compassion for the sinful children of men, is such, that *he afflicts them only if need be; if judgment* on the guilty, *is his strange work;* may we not rationally infer, that he would not have required such uncommon and painful sufferings, from so pure and excellent a being, had they not

been necessary to the accomplishment of a scheme of benevolence, proportioned to the grandeur of the means?

The fourth and last class of benefits, which I have received from the infinite goodness of God *are those of revelation*, which with relation to me, are the supernatural means by which God in his word enlightens my understanding and fortifies my faith.

Revelation, contains all that which "God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets," together with what he has "in these last days spoken by his Son." How gracious is that providence which has preserved and handed down these valuable oracles which are addressed to me, in consequence of my being born and educated in the church of Christ. When I compare my privileges, I who from a child have known the holy scriptures, with those of a poor savage, who has no hope, and is without God in the world; how greatly ought I to estimate them!

Revelation, *by the light of faith*, illuminates my reason, it gives me the knowledge of God, my Creator and Father, and of eternal salvation to which I am called. What objects for thy contemplation, O my soul! in a being perfectly excellent, and an immortality perfectly blessed! without these hopes, what were life? and with it, what are its greatest evils!

I can now "look to Jesus, as the author and finisher of my faith;" in him I behold "God manifested in the flesh;" he not only announces to me eternal life, by his promises; but as my forerunner he enters into it, by his death and resurrection, and calls upon me, to follow him. Thus is he become "the way, the truth, and the life;" and if I possess faith in him, I may with St. Paul, "determine not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; counting all things but loss, for the excellency of his knowledge."

But here it may be inquired, whether faith alone is sufficient for my salvation and sanctification, which is a gift of divine grace, not absolutely necessary? since "without holiness, no one shall see the Lord." To this I reply, "that faith in the only begotten Son of God" is sufficient, since we are assured that "whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life;" because sanctification is a necessary effect of this "faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" and an entire persuasion of their reality, will necessarily *sanctify*, *transform*, and *renew* our hearts. Can I know the extent of divine goodness, and not love God with my whole heart, and my neighbour as myself? Can I perceive the benefit of eternal salvation, and not joyfully relinquish every thing in this world that may stand opposed to it? Thus does faith in Christ Jesus, comprehend all those virtues and graces, by which sin and the world are to be subdued, and my sanctification and salvation completed; for Christ is made unto such as believe, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption."

By faith, I become united to my Saviour, from whom I derive continual light. *His spirit* dwells in me; and with it, all necessary assistance to work out my salvation. As a master he commands me what I am to perform; and will hereafter judge me concerning my obedience. As a physician he administers relief to the maladies of my soul. He is that sun of righteousness which has arisen upon me, with healing on his wings. He is an *example*, *a model* for my imitation, a *conductor* and *guide*, who will never forsake me in life, or in death: and to the praise and glory of his grace I can affirm, "that without him I can do nothing." Let us therefore be full of thankfulness to God for the knowledge he has given us in this life, of the benefits reserved for us hereafter, and conveyed by that word, full of grace and truth, which was made flesh and dwelt among us, of whose fulness we have received grace for grace.

Let me conclude the enumeration of the manifold benefits of Divine Grace, with the recollection of the succours and means of instruction and improvement it affords, and which surround me under various forms. And first his word, his sacraments, and public ordinances. In his word I possess "all that is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness." Let me never cease thankfully to acknowledge the goodness of Providence, who has preserved this valuable treasure, and transmitted it to me, through so many ages.

Nor ought I to be unmindful of those authentic monuments, which the great Mediator of the new covenant established in his church, for the confirmation and edification of his followers. In baptism, I see represented that purification from the uncleanness of sin, which is the *end* of the evangelical covenant. In the Lord's supper I behold the *mean* of this purification held forth, in the death of the Son of God.

How great also is the privilege I enjoy in the appointment of ministers and pastors to celebrate divine service and preach and explain the word of God. How solemn and edifying is public worship, where with one heart, and one voice, an assembled multitude join to present their adorations, praises, and thanksgivings; their humiliations, prayers and supplications; to their merciful Creator, and universal Father; who in wisdom and goodness set apart one day in seven for the suspension of worldly cares, and the prosecution of the more important concerns of our immortal souls.

Such are the *general* succours of divine grace, established in the church of Christ.

What shall I say of those which are *particular*, and which are constantly at hand, were I disposed to improve them. Every valuable production of human understanding, every book capable of enlightening, and leading me to good, I owe in some measure to the light of the gospel; which like that of the natural

sun, spreads its penetrating rays far and wide; enlightening even those who neither perceive, nor own its influence.

I must not omit one observation more, before I terminate this long list of gospel benefits; viz. That every dispensation in the ordinary course of Providence, borrows a particular and salutary efficacy from this economy. Suppose, by way of illustration, some calamitous event, adapted to convince me of the vanity of the world; this, were I a pagan, or what is yet worse, a Christian without religion, whose hopes are all centred in the world, would fill me with desolation and despair; but assisted by the light of the gospel this event contributes to detach me more and more from the world; and to give vigour and solidity to my future hopes. Would to God I had constantly availed myself of the multiplied assistance which Divine Grace has afforded me! how many sins should I have avoided, how many errors in conduct should I have escaped! How many good works should I have performed, which alas! I have neglected; and how much greater would have been my progress in sanctification and happiness.

Having thus concluded the review of those benefits which I have hitherto received from the infinite goodness of God, and which excite in me *a love of gratitude;* I come now to consider in the second place the promise of future and eternal happiness, which produces in me an *interested love.* Let not any imagine the term *interest* to be misplaced here; for a sordid interest, an ill directed attachment to the perishable things of this world, is alone reprehensible. It was this carnal self interest with which our Lord reproached the multitudes that followed him: "verily, verily I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." But we do not perceive that Simon Peter met with any reproof when he said, "Lord to whom should we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Let us therefore not fear to own that our love to God is founded on interest; "but by a patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, immortality," and God will bestow upon us, "eternal life."

Eternal life! this is the benefit yet reserved for me! and it contains all those blessings, which the goodness of my Creator will shower down upon me for ever and ever.

The first character which distinguishes the blessings of heaven, and which gives them so superior a value, is, their eternal duration. We are told that "the things which are seen are temporal, but that the things which are not seen are eternal:" And this is alone sufficient to give us the highest idea of their incomparable value. Happiness, however exalted, or durable, cannot be perfect if it is not everlasting; as it is constantly verging towards its end, and therefore will become to the possessor, but like a vain dream, which must forever vanish. Not such is the perfect gift of God. He is the origin of life, and of life eternal; and will be the dispenser *of eternal glory, of immortality.* Secure of this promise, what is to me the instability of earthly things? What the frailty of my body, or the short span of human life? for when arrived at immortality; death with respect to me will be swallowed up in victory.

It is worthy of observation on this subject, that scripture never expresses its magnificent promises by the terms *happiness* or *felicity;* never assures us of *eternal happiness,* but simply of *eternal life,* of immortality. The reason of this singularity may arise from these promises being addressed to poor mortals, whose transitory existence here is liable to so many miseries, which accompany them to the grave. To beings thus circumstanced, a promise which contains an exemption from these afflictions, and from death, is in effect an assurance of perfect happiness; for it is easy to conceive, that beatitude must be inseparable from an eternal life, in the presence of God. Here, I am "alienated from the life of God;" but hereafter, I shall be united to him, shall live by his life, and be happy in his happiness: what a reason is this for love!

With relation to the nature of celestial happiness, we can know but little here. It is therefore easier to describe it negatively, by excluding all the evils with which we are acquainted; than positively, by a detail of its enjoyments. We know however that they will be of an intellectual nature, that our minds will derive satisfaction from external objects, and from their internal feelings; that the glory of the divine presence will manifest itself to us, that our society will be composed of holy and happy spirits, and that where our Saviour is, there we shall be also.

When I next consider the Divine Being in himself, and behold all his attributes and qualities consistent with, or founded upon perfect goodness; it produces, thirdly, *a love of attachment.* But as I have been led in the course of this work to an ample detail on this subject, I shall avoid repeating what has already been said. It is sufficient to observe, that the highest conceptions we can form, fall infinitely short of the excellence of the Divine Nature. If our tranquillity and happiness in this world, increase in proportion to our knowledge and love of him; what must be the felicity of a state *where we shall see him as he is,* and where *he will be all in all.*

To conclude. My love to God is founded on *gratitude* for benefits received; it is founded on *interest,* because connected with life and immortality; it is founded on *attachment,* because it relates to a being infinitely excellent and amiable; consequently *infinite goodness is the only solid foundation of love.*

If it were possible that in the Deity, any thing inconsistent with goodness, could exist; were he implacable and cruel; power might make him a just object of terror to his weak dependent creatures; but he could never be the object of their love. It is goodness alone can produce this sentiment, even in creatures comparatively *evil.*

I come now to shew that this love to God, comprehends every pious and devout sentiment, and predominates over every inferior affection. It *disengages us from the world*, it produces an entire *submission to God, and confidence in him*; it creates in us an ardent desire to obtain his approbation and favour; whence proceeds a *salutary fear of offending*: on each of these I must make a few observations.

In the first place, where the love of God is founded on a conviction of his infinite goodness, it swallows up every inferior attachment, and *disengages us from the world*; whose love is incompatible with it. St. John observes that "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." We may reverse this proposition and say, if any man love God, the love of the world is not in him; because in one or other of these, and not in both, is happiness to be sought: and sure I need not remind any one how imperfect, how unsatisfactory, how transient is the happiness of this world, "at its best estate it is altogether vanity." But when the love of our Creator prevails, temporal things are estimated according to their real value; and "our hearts are set on the things that are above," where our hidden treasure is. We may indeed with cheerfulness enjoy the blessings of life, as a wise traveller benefits by every comfort he meets with on the road; but we shall not suffer our journey to be impeded by them, or our souls to be cast down or disquieted by their privation. We shall learn with the great apostle, "in whatever state we are, therewith to be content; how to be abased and how to abound, to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to suffer need." This is the temper by which alone we can enjoy any comfort even in this world; and which will enable us to say at our departure out of it, "that though we walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death we fear no evil, for the Lord is with us, his rod and staff, they comfort us."

Secondly, if we love God for his infinite goodness, we must delight in his will; whence arises *perfect submission*. Convinced that his laws, and all his dispensations are wise and good; can we have any wish but to render him the most faithful and cordial obedience; the most sincere acquiescence and humble resignation, of which our imperfect natures are capable?

Thirdly, it is not difficult to perceive that from a love like this, *confidence in God* must necessarily flow. Convinced that our happiness is in the hands of a being, who has the will, and the power to effect it; we may repose an unlimited and unshaken trust in him; and though the waves of trouble should roll over us; though distresses of every kind should assault us, our courage will never fail; and despair, that worst of enemies, will never approach us, even in the most discouraging circumstances; "against hope, we shall believe in hope;" because we know that our confidence, is in *the rock of ages*, who can never abandon us. How superior is this trust to any we should dare repose in ourselves; for where is the mortal who should presume to assert that he *can never forsake his Maker?* The fatal and frequent experience we have had of our own weakness, should create in us a proper diffidence, and a constant vigilance, but it must not rob us of our confidence in God, who "will do exceedingly more for us than we can ask or think."

Fourthly and lastly. Where the love of God prevails, a desire of pleasing him, must prevail also, and thence *a filial fear* of offending. Sentiments of gratitude for past benefits will make us look with detestation and horror, on every act that might incur his displeasure. And if we are convinced that our own happiness is promoted, or injured, in proportion as we obey, or violate his commands; we shall not dare to prefer our will to his. Beholding him as a being infinitely amiable, we shall desire "to be imitators of him as dear children;" and thence must naturally proceed a fear of becoming odious and hateful in his sight, by any opposition to "his perfect and acceptable will." Thus do gratitude, interest, and pleasure, conspire to penetrate the heart with a godly fear of offending, and to raise in us a desire of approaching and resembling him, on whom our happiness ever has, and ever must depend; and who is the most amiable and most excellent of beings. But if ever we should deviate from the right way, *and our love should wax cold*; should we thence become habitual and hardened sinners; then, as I have already shewn when treating the subject of Divine Justice, may we justly apprehend that formidable branch of perfect goodness; which being exempt from all weakness, will not relent, but pour down upon us "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish;" from which no power in the universe shall be able to screen us. Where then is the security, where the pretence which can authorize any one wilfully to offend his Maker.

These various sentiments of piety, which I have regarded as so many branches of love to God; such as detachment from the world, submission, confidence, and filial fear; these constitute a state at once the most perfect and happy, which is attainable on earth, and even a foretaste of celestial happiness; because they produce a state of *union with God*; a union similar in nature, though inferior in degree, with that for which our Saviour prayed to "his Father, and our Father," in those remarkable words preceding his death; where he supplicates, not only for his disciples, but for all who should believe through their word; "that they all may be one, even as the Father was in him and he in the Father, that so also they might be one in them." Justly may our hearts be animated by so sublime a privilege, to disregard the perishable and childish toys of life, and to glory that "we are not of the world," even as our Saviour

"was not of the world," but aspire at being made perfect in one, together with our forerunner, and now exalted Lord.

This inestimable privilege belongs only to Christians; it is the gospel alone which thus unites us to God here, by the mediation of a Saviour. This is confirmed by the discourse of our Lord with his disciples, in the eleventh of Matthew, where he says, "verily I say unto you, that among them that are born of a woman, there hath not risen a greater (prophet) than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven (in my church) is greater than he." Let us therefore rejoice in the grandeur of our vocation, as members of the Church of Christ; let us not rest contented with those external marks of union, which can only draw upon our heads accumulated mischief, if they do not produce a spiritual and vital union with God; which being began here, will go on increasing to perfection for ever and ever.

Let us now examine *the sixth consequence, which flows from the infinite goodness of God, which is a disposition to love our neighbour as ourselves; in furnishing us with the most powerful motives to this sincere and universal charity.*

Though every sincere Christian finds reason to lament, that the gospel does not produce as much good in the world as might naturally follow from its excellent institutes; nevertheless it has so far enlarged the minds of men, since it has been disengaged from the dreadful errors and superstitions that disfigured it before the reformation; and none I believe will need now to be told *who is their neighbour;* they acknowledge, however their actions may deny, that their *fellow creatures*, beings of the same common nature, are their brethren: and this is true without distinction of good or bad; friends or enemies; believers or unbelievers; countrymen or strangers; all are our neighbours.

What then is implied *in loving all men as we do ourselves?* It is to be interested in their happiness, as sincerely as we are in our own, and for this perfect charity the love of God furnishes us with the most powerful motives. It is worthy of being remarked that this perfect, this universal charity, from which not even our enemies are excluded; was never equally insisted upon, till the goodness and infinite love of God to all men, was manifested in the gospel; where it is given as a new commandment.

I do not say however of charity, as I did *of joy, and of love to God*, that his infinite goodness is their only foundation; because it is in the nature of man, to love his fellow beings; whence it is evident on the one hand *that man is by his nature amiable;* and on the other, *that he is by his nature good, and formed for social love:* these important truths I shall endeavour to set in the clearest light.

In the first place I assert, that *the nature of man is amiable, and worthy of being loved.* I need not, in order to prove this, enter into a detail of all the noble faculties with which he is endowed; but shall confine myself to that capacity of knowing, loving, and resembling his Creator, which constitutes at once his excellence, his dignity, and his felicity. For though we often see this capacity for holiness and perfection, giving way to criminal and odious sentiments, and a being amiable by his nature, become the perpetrator of atrocious crimes; nevertheless we cannot help perceiving that this depravity *is contrary to nature;* consequently *accidental and transitory;* and must sooner or later be destroyed by the complete development of his excellent faculties.

But I have said in the second place, *that man is by his nature good, and formed for social love.* Many are the evidences I could bring forward in support of this truth, but from amongst them I shall select only the most simple and apparent.

If man is made after the Divine image; his nature must be good, and formed *to love his neighbour as himself, for God is love;* therefore without goodness he can never resemble a Being perfectly good. He may by his intellectual powers, bear some resemblance to his Maker, but these are only given to render him capable of distinguishing and of loving whatever is by its nature amiable and excellent: he must therefore resemble his heavenly Father, in his sincere and universal love of his brethren.

It is true however, that in this *love* an essential and necessary difference must remain between God and man. An indigent and dependent creature, cannot love with the disinterestedness of a perfect and self-sufficient Creator. But though a sense of his wants, and a necessity of supplying them may sometimes deprive him of leisure, or of means to shew his benevolence, by actual benefits; yet unless blinded and led astray by some disorderly passion, it will not prevent his resembling his Maker, by sentiments of universal good-will; and so far will his own wants be from stifling his benevolence, that they will excite in him a more lively and active compassion for the relief of his fellow creatures. I conclude then that man is naturally inclined to goodness and benevolence, because he is the child of God, whose image he bears.

The nature of happiness, furnishes us with a second proof of this truth. If man is formed for happiness, he is formed for charity. Happiness consists in the full exercise and development of our faculties. Now among those the most active, the most lively, and the most delightful in its exercise, is the faculty of loving. The heart, is the seat of this faculty and formed for love, as the eye is for sight, and the ear for hearing. Those cold, insensible, and unnatural hearts, whose love is centred in themselves, must be wretched; happiness will fly before them, and elude their eager grasp. This is the situation of all such as seek their happiness in the world, and not in God. Wealth, honours, and power, though

they excite such ardent desires, have a mark of falsity stamped upon them, which proves the good they confer to be counterfeit, not real; for they can only yield *exclusive happiness*, which belongs to some, only in consequence of the privation of it to others; thence an opposition which divides mankind, gives rise to continual wars in public, and to discords and animosities in private life, which stifle the natural sentiments of charity and brotherly love; and in their stead place insensibility, disdain, and a barbarous and inflexible cruelty, properly called *inhumanity*; and give their possessors a stronger resemblance to savage beasts, than to human creatures.

Far different is that happiness for which we were designed; it is composed of true, of spiritual blessings; such as the pure and lively rays of truth will afford to the mind, and virtuous sentiments to the heart. It is a *communicative happiness* which expands and becomes greater the more it is diffused. Our Saviour who was well acquainted with our nature, and with the felicity suited to it, has declared that it is more blessed to give, than to receive; as St. Paul records in the twentieth chapter of the Acts.

Besides, in order to confirm this by representing it under another, and perhaps more striking point of view; man is formed for society, and must therefore be of a kind and benevolent nature, and inclined to love his neighbour as himself. That he is a social being is evident from the declaration of his Maker, who said, "it is not good for man to be alone," which is true both in a physical, and moral sense.

With respect to the former of these, solitude is not good for man; because destitute of the assistance of others, he could not procure a supply of his wants, but must either perish, or drag on a miserable existence. He is therefore formed for society. But can it promote his happiness if he is not a *sociable being*, that is, if his heart is not naturally disposed sincerely to love his fellow-beings. Suppose for a moment a community among which no one was any way concerned for the welfare of the rest; this society without any bond of union, far from procuring happiness to any one of its members, would be a horrible theatre of odious crimes, and shocking misery.

That it is not good for man to be alone, is not less true, considered in a moral view; for solitude would cause him to feel a dreadful void; by leaving unsatisfied the greatest, the most imperious wants, a necessity of loving. He could neither soften his troubles by pouring them in the heart of a being like himself; nor increase his enjoyments, by sharing them; in a word, he could not fail of being miserable. But draw him from this solitude, place him in a society of beings like himself, rational, enlightened, pious and good, cemented by that charity which St. Paul calls *the bond of perfectness*, and he will be as completely happy as his nature will admit. The picture I have just drawn, is not the effect of fancy or imagination; it is a faithful, but humble sketch of the celestial society for which we are formed, and which we shall one day enjoy.

It was necessary thus particularly to demonstrate the natural inclination of man to goodness and charity; in order to establish that celestial virtue on its true foundation. But it must be observed also that I assert this, as it relates to human nature in its principle, and not in that *animal* and degraded state to which carnal and worldly passions lead. For notwithstanding any inherent good in man, he may be, and alas! continually is, drawn aside by the jarrings and contentions of his own temporal interest, with those of his neighbour; and when this selfishness is become habitual and predominant, he is in danger of degenerating into the most cruel and ferocious animal in the universe. It is therefore necessary for man in order to his following his natural bent to charity, that he should be freed from the slavery of his passions, for St. Paul observes, that "charity proceeds out of a pure heart;" to obtain this emancipation he has need of continual and powerful motives, capable of exciting him to virtue, and of suppressing every emotion of covetousness, of anger, and hatred, the instant they arise in his soul. *If therefore we are convinced of the infinite goodness of the Supreme Being, we shall find therein every possible motive of charity.*

They may be reduced to three, as they relate to our *own interest, to that of our neighbour, and to charity considered in itself.*

With respect to the first of these, Divine Goodness has strictly connected our particular interest with that of our neighbour; because in requiring our supreme love, it produces on the one hand *an indifference to worldly objects*, and on the other makes us see *in our neighbour a second self, instead of a rival and competitor.*

The love of God, by *detaching us from the world*, and purifying us from carnal passions, destroys every obstacle to charity, and leaves it to flow in an uninterrupted course. The happiness of others becomes necessary in order to our own, and we desire it with equal sincerity. Thus our interests become so strictly united, that in labouring to promote those of our neighbour, we are inevitably advancing our own.

Placing the supreme affection of our souls on a being whose adorable goodness renders him the object of our love, we cannot fail of seeing in our neighbour a second self, "for he who loveth God, loveth his brother also." Can we love God for the multitude of his tender mercies, and take no interest in, or concern for, the creatures who are the objects of them? This is impossible. We may therefore conclude that we do not love God aright, if we do not love our neighbour as ourselves.

The second motive for charity relates to our neighbour, *whom the infinite goodness of the Deity makes us behold as an object worthy of love.* Are we not endowed with similar natures, partakers of the same celestial vocation, objects of the same love, and sharers in the same redemption? We need therefore only consider our neighbour as an equal

partner with us in the love and favour of God, and as a brother and companion in future felicity; in order to experience fervent charity.

But should our neighbour be our enemy, should his hatred incline him to seek our injury; must we then forget our own interests to advance those of an implacable and cruel foe? The knowledge we have of God resolves this question, by shewing us, what is indeed *our true interest*; it teaches us to view our bitterest enemy, as an instrument in his hand, incapable of proceeding farther than he shall permit. We may, by every lawful means, preserve ourselves from the effects of his malice, as we would avoid sickness, or any other calamity; but by keeping our eye fixed on the adorable goodness of the First Cause, we shall never give way to the bitterness of resentment, but shall behold the blindness and wickedness of our enemy, with the compassion it deserves; for of all the unhappy beings that cover the earth, none ought more to excite pity, than the wicked. Poor, wretched creatures! slaves to the worst of masters, their own horrid passions, and engaged, as the wise man observes, *in a deceitful work*; shall not we, beings of the same nature, and liable to the same errors, feel our hearts melt with compassion for creatures *who know not what they do?* No other sentiment can possibly become us.

The wickedness and cruelty of our enemy, by exciting our compassion, enables us to see him, as God himself beholds him. Odious and detestable as his present state of vice renders him; yet when the means Divine Wisdom shall employ for his correction and amendment, shall have produced their effect; when he is washed and purified, he will become our companion in eternal felicity. At present he persecutes and injures us; but a time will certainly come, when he will do us justice, and make us ample amends. Far then from being ever "overcome of evil," let us resolve to "overcome evil with good;" and in the true spirit of Christianity; if our enemy hunger "let us feed him, if he thirst let us give him drink;" thus shall our charitable treatment melt down his resentment, as coals heaped on the head of a crucible, dissolve the metal it contains: we must, therefore, according to the command of our Saviour, return blessing for cursing, and pray for our enemies. Such are the powerful motives, with which the infinite goodness of God furnishes us, for the love of our fellow creatures; even for the wicked, and our implacable enemies.

I come now to consider, thirdly, *charity in itself, as the most excellent and glorious virtue that can possibly adorn our nature.* Sentiments of kindness, of brotherly love, and charity, are such as can alone constitute any resemblance between the human, and Divine nature. Destitute of them, can we hope to bear any likeness to a being *who is love?* Were we even possessed of every other virtue, what analogy could be found in a creature, whose sole care, attention and pursuits were confined to his own interests; and a being whose delight is to shower down on all happiness and joy; doing good even "to the evil and unthankful?" Where, amidst the immense universe, could such a being be placed to find happiness? In solitude he would be destitute, forlorn, and miserable; and in society he would be an unwelcome, and unhappy intruder.

But when on the contrary our heart is enlarged by charity, which makes us sincerely desire, and zealously pursue every opportunity of promoting the happiness of our fellow creatures; then it is that we resemble the best of beings, that we bear his image, and that in our measure and degree, we are "merciful, as our Father in heaven is merciful," or as St. Matthew expresses the words of our Saviour, that we are "perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect."

It will be obvious to all who are conversant with scripture, that as among the Divine perfections, goodness and mercy, are the most frequently and strongly mentioned; so no virtue is so largely commended, or so strongly enforced as charity: I request my reader to peruse the thirteenth chapter of the first of Corinthians, which contains a description of charity, and gives it the pre-eminence over every other virtue. Let us also collect some of the most remarkable texts on that subject. The first of which is taken from the above mentioned chapter, we cannot carry our submission to the divine will farther, *than to give our body to be burned;* and nevertheless this act *will profit us nothing* if we are destitute of charity: disqualified for a society of spirits who dwell in perfect love, we shall be excluded, and have our portion with the reprobate. How positively does this decision shew, that we cannot be acceptable to God, without charity.

The end and design of the gospel dispensation is our *purification from all iniquity.* But wherein consists this important change? St. Paul informs us, "that the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart: this is the end of the gospel; and if love prevail in our hearts, we shall be workers together with God in his great plan of universal salvation; for we shall desire happiness to be extended, and labour to promote it. But while our minds are strangers to these benevolent desires, while they are cold and indifferent to the interests of others; we may be assured that this happy change, this renovation of mind, is not yet wrought in us; and that whatever may be the virtues to which we make pretence, we are tares in the field, whose portion is to be burned. But when the gospel, which sets forth the infinite goodness of God, has inflamed our hearts with charity to our neighbour; then are we such as he would have us to be, and prepared for a communion with the God of charity; in a word, we are *the wheat which will be gathered into his garner.*

The last example I mean to cite in favour of this divine virtue, we meet with in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew from the thirty-first verse to the end.

After having perused the awful and interesting picture of a future judgment which it contains; let us reflect for a few moments upon a scene at which we shall every one be present: "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," there to receive the glorious sentence of absolution and pardon, or of condemnation and punishment. We see that we shall be judged solely concerning our *charity*, and acquitted or condemned, in proportion as we have cultivated, or suppressed this most excellent of virtues. We are told by St. James that "if we fulfil the royal law, according to the scriptures, and love our neighbour as ourselves; we do well." This is the law of our judge, by which we shall be tried; because it was *his great, his new*, his special commandment: "for he that loveth his brother, abideth in light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him:" for every one "that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

In the sentence which our celestial King, our Divine Judge will issue from his glorious throne, let us observe the tenderness of charity, tempering the authority of a sovereign master. He places the least and meanest of the human race, among his brethren; and speaks of the smallest office of charity granted, or refused them, as if immediately regarding himself. How affecting is the idea, that whenever we *minister to the necessities* of a poor mortal, our Saviour considers the benefit as if done to himself. Let us not lose sight of this truth, and we shall never refuse to succour the distressed; or wish to evade any opportunity of doing them all the good in our power.

Descend, O divine charity! animate our hearts with thy celestial flame; form our perfection, constitute our delight, and render us acceptable to the God of charity; before whom destitute of thee, we are nothing. Come and unite us forever to the greatest and best of beings, and to his living image, our benevolent Redeemer. Render us merciful, that we may obtain mercy; teach us sincerely to forgive, even until seventy times seven, that we may receive the pardon of our innumerable offences. Sublime delightful virtue, thou shalt never fail, but shalt form the blessedness of the blessed, and be a river of pleasure of which they shall drink for ever in the glorious abodes of heaven.

I quit with regret this delightful subject, which has furnished matter for my sixth and last consequence, drawn from the infinite goodness of God; and I flatter myself, I have made it appear *that the knowledge of the perfect goodness of the Divine Nature, contains every possible motive that can lead us to love our neighbour as ourselves.* I have shewn the union of interest that subsists among mankind; the amiableness and excellence of human nature; and lastly the attractive beauty and dignity of charity in itself, as the most glorious virtue that can adorn an intellectual being, and without which, it is impossible to be happy in any state.

I have now completed what I proposed on this subject. In what I have said I have adhered to my promise of drawing proofs from reason and scripture for every thing I have advanced; and am able to declare, in the presence of him, before whose tribunal I must account for every action; that I have not endeavoured to impose any thing on the faith of others which I do not believe true, on these two great foundations.

That the Supreme Being is perfectly good, is so capital and interesting a truth, that the whole of religion hangs upon it. When I am assured that goodness is the foundation, and happiness the end of all the ways of God, to myself and every creature; hope is the anchor of my soul, sure and steadfast; for though "his ways should be in the deep and his paths in the mighty waters;" though I should experience every external evil; no affliction shall shake my confidence, never will I dishonour, by a moment's mistrust, a being who has in mercy commanded me "to cast all my care upon him;" because "he careth for me."

But if I entertain any doubts on this subject, by the admission of any doctrine incompatible with it, alas! in losing this assurance, I have lost my all; and religion presents nothing to my mind but terror and desolation. The prospect of futurity fills me with alarm, and immortality distracts me. The greatest of beings, without perfect goodness, is no longer an object infinitely amiable to me; and together with the love of God must every pious sentiment expire. Should charity remain, because the native inmate of my being, alas! it could only aggravate and insure my misery. So true is it *that the whole of religion depends on the doctrine of the infinite goodness of God.*

And if religion is thus founded, it must follow of necessity, *that every doctrine incompatible with goodness is false, absurd, and even pernicious and fatal to the last degree.* I have therefore in the whole of this treatise, in establishing the doctrine of perfect goodness, and following it in its consequences; constantly combated such erroneous opinions, as represent the Creator of the human race, as a being whose power will be employed in inflicting never ending torments on a considerable portion of his creatures, and have established the non-eternity of future torments. Let not mankind be induced to suppress this truth, from any apprehended abuse of it; because this is tacitly to deny, that it is *the will of God that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth;* and to affirm, that some are best conducted to salvation by ignorance and error. It is also to assert that in order to produce the love of God in the heart of man, he must be represented to them as a being infinitely cruel. But lest sinners should abuse this truth so ill understood, it is necessary it should be rightly explained to them; that they may not give themselves up to fatal illusions, either respecting the severity, or the mercy of God. O God! Thou Being supremely good! cause the precious ray of thy truth to illuminate every heart, that they may be filled with thy love and thy fear; and to effect this, *open the lips* of thy ministers, *that they may shew forth thy praise.* Amen.

THE

TWENTY-FOURTH AND TWENTY-FIFTH CHAPTERS

OF

SAINT MATTHEW'S GOSPEL,

ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES, &c.

BY HOSEA BALLOU, 2d.

PHILADELPHIA:
GIHON, FAIRCHILD & CO.
1843.

PREFACE.

If the reader is already acquainted with the popular commentators, or with the remarks of Universalist writers, on this chapter, we would apprize him beforehand that he will find but little important matter that is new in the following exposition. Still, it has cost us much time in ascertaining, as precisely as we could, the *detail* of particulars alluded to, and in tracing out the current of thought that runs through the whole, and also in verifying facts and authorities which others had adduced. We had found some inaccuracies of statement, and some confusion of arrangement, in the notes of Dr. A. Clarke, for instance; and we hoped, by unwearied vigilance, to avoid such blemishes, and, by strictly following out the tenor of the prophecy, to place its several parts in a clearer and more thoroughly consistent light.

Our principal motive, however, in attempting a regular exposition of the twenty-fourth chapter, was, to open the way to a similar exposition of the twenty-fifth. The two chapters belong together, consisting of but one series of remarks; so that we cannot fairly come at the latter, without first going through with the former,—unless, indeed, we would begin in the middle of the discourse.

A few words may be needed to account for the insertion of the two columns of text, in smaller type, that run immediately under St. Matthew's. Let it, then, be observed, that the same discourse which is recorded in this twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, is given also by Mark, in his thirteenth chapter; and again by Luke, mostly in his twenty-first chapter, but partly in his seventeenth. Now, it struck us that we might be aided in understanding Matthew's record, by consulting that of Mark and Luke, who sometimes express the meaning in plain language, where Matthew uses figures, and who frequently employ a different phraseology that offers some advantage for determining the leading idea. We have accordingly placed Mark's text immediately under Matthew's, and then Luke's below Mark's, with figures in the margin of both, answering to the parallel verses in Matthew's, so that the reader may instantly strike on the corresponding passages. The figures denoting the number of the verses in Mark and Luke, are raised *above* the line, like references, in their texts; those denoting the number of the verses in Matthew, are inserted *on* the line in his text. We would suggest to the reader, and especially to the student, the importance of comparing the texts of Mark and Luke, throughout, with that of Matthew.

INTRODUCTION.

DATE, OCCASION, PRECEDING CONTEXT.

The interview and conversation, related in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of St. Matthew, took place about A. D. 33; which was thirty-seven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Matthew, Mark, and Luke agree in representing that Jesus had just been publicly teaching *in the temple*, (Matt. xxi. 23 to xxiv. 1; Mark xii. 35 to xiii. 1; Luke xx. 1 to xxi. 5;) and according to Matthew, (xxiii. 1,) his disciples, as well as the multitude, were present. He there denounced the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees in the most unsparing manner, (Matt. xxiii. 13–35,) rebuking them for their exclusive spirit, their rapacity under the pretence of piety, their zeal in proselytizing, their evasion of their oaths, their neglect of the important matters of the law, their inward corruption under a fair outside, and their murderous hostility. He forewarned them that upon them would come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. "Verily I say unto you," concluded he, "All these things shall come upon *this generation*. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your *house is left unto you desolate*; for I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is *he that cometh* in the name of the Lord!" (xxiii. 35–39,) meaning, by their "house," either their national condition, or, more probably, that house of their pride, the temple, in which he was then standing. This mention of its speedy desolation, and also of his *coming* in the name of the Lord, seems to have struck the disciples, and to have occasioned the conversation related in the twenty-fourth chapter, which imdiately follows, thus:

MATT. xxiv.

1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him*, for to show him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

MARK xiii.

1 [1] And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings 2 *are here!* [2] And Jesus answering, said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

LUKE xxi.

1 [5] And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he 2 said, [6] As *for* these things which ye behold, the days shall come in which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Ver. 1. Having finished the foregoing address to the Jews, Jesus, with his disciples, now leaves the temple, to go towards (ver. 3) the mount of Olives. As they depart, the disciples point him to the buildings, &c. of the temple, which they had just understood him to say (xxiii. 38) should be left desolate. According to the more definite account given by Mark, it is but one of them who says, "Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings!" astonished, perhaps, that so magnificent and solid a structure was to be destroyed. For, Josephus says, that the stones of this temple were about 45 feet long, by 22 wide, and 14 thick; some of them, indeed, nearly twice as long. The temple itself, exclusive of the immense assemblage of courts, cloisters, and walls around it, was about 182 feet long, and 127 wide; and 182 high, above the lofty foundation-wall. "It was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and, at the first rising of the sun, reflected back a very fiery splendour, and made those, who forced themselves to look upon it, to turn away their eyes, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this temple appeared to strangers, when they were coming to it, at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow; for, as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were very exceeding white," that is, of white marble. (J. War, v. c. v. 4, 6. Ant. xv. c. xi. 3.)

Ver. 2. —*not be left here one stone upon another*, &c.;] a strong, proverbial phrase, signifying only a complete demolition, (2 Sam. xvii. 13.) Accordingly, when Titus took Jerusalem, about thirty-seven years afterwards, he "gave orders," says Josephus, "that they should demolish the whole city *and temple*," (J. War, vii. c. i. 1;) and he adds, that the entire circuit of the city, except the western wall and three towers, "was so

MATT. xxiv.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world,

MARK xiii.

[3] And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, 3 over against the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, asked him privately, [4] Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled, [*literally*, ended?] [5] And 4 Jesus, answering them, began to say, Take

LUKE xxi.

[7] And they asked him, saying, Master, but 3 when shall these things be? and what sign *will there be* when these things shall come to

thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited."

Ver. 3. —*on the mount of Olives;*] the summit of which was but little more than half a mile, on an air-line, from the temple, or eastern wall of the city, and directly east from the temple. It was about 700 feet higher than the intervening valley of Jehoshaphat; overlooked even the temple itself, and commanded a view of every part of the city.—*The disciples came . . . . privately, saying*, &c.;] privately, or, by themselves, probably because it was dangerous to speak openly of the destruction of the temple, (see Matt. xxvi. 61,) and because they also knew that Christ was wont to speak more plainly with them only, than before the multitude. It should be kept in mind, that all which follows in this and the next chapter, was a *private* conversation, held on the mount of Olives. —*When shall these things* (viz. the things just spoken of) *be? and what the sign of thy coming*, (*parousia*,) *and of the end of the age*,* (*tês sunteleias tou aiônos?*)] It

* "End of the *age*:" so this text is translated by Hammond, Le Clerc, Whitby, Pearce, Beausobre, and Lenfant, (*fin du siècle*,) Doddridge, Macknight, and Paulus; besides Wakefield, Improved Version, and Kenrick. Dr. A. Clarke seems to prefer this rendering, and even Scott hesitates between it and the common one. Dr. Campbell renders it ambiguously, *conclusion of this state*. The usual meaning of the original term, *aiôn*, is *age*, or *great length of time*. It is a word radically different from those rendered *world* in other verses (14, 21) of this chapter. The Jews were accustomed to divide the entire duration of time into two great ages, viz. the age *before* the beginning of the Messiah's reign, and the age *after*: *this* age, and the age *to come*; the *present* age, and the *future*. It was understood that the age then present, was to *end* when the Messiah should overthrow his enemies and establish his kingdom; and this was probably the idea that suggested the expression in the text. So St. Paul says, to the Corinthians, that certain facts in the Old Testament, "were written for our instruction, upon whom the *ends of the world* (*ages*, *ta telê tôn, aiônôn*,) are come" (1 Cor x. 11.) So, too, he says, to the Hebrews, "now once in *the end of the world*, (*ages*, *suntelia, tôn aiônôn*,) hath he [Christ] appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. ix 26.) On the same principle, we often find the phrase "the last days" applied, in the New Testament, to the time then present.

Most critics, however, are agreed that the term, *aiôn*, was *sometimes* used by the Jews for the material world: as examples in the New Testament, they quote Heb. i. 2; xi 3.

MATT. xxiv.

[*literally*, of the age?] 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you: 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 6. And

MARK xiii.

heed lest any man deceive you: 6 For many 5 shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ;* 6 and shall deceive many. 7 And when ye

LUKE xxi.

4, 5 pass? 8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ;* and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

is sometimes contended that here are *three* questions: 1. When shall these things (*viz. the destruction of the temple*, &c.) be? 2. What shall be the sign of thy coming (*to bring this destruction*)? and, 3. *What shall be the sign* of the end of the world *itself?*—a very different event! Now there are, at the most, but two questions here, or rather but one inquiry put in two forms; first, respecting the *time*, and, secondly, respecting the *signs* thereof,—thus: 1. *When* shall these things be? and, 2. What the *sign* of thy coming and of the end of the world, or age?—not, What the sign of thy coming? and what the sign *also* of the end of the world? as of two separate events. The very form of the sentence shows that the disciples supposed that his coming, and what they called the end of the world, or age, would make but one event; and that the *sign* of the one would be the sign of the other. Were there any room still left for doubt here, it would be foreclosed by the form in which the other Evangelists record the question; Mark, thus: ". . . . . what the sign when *all these things* shall be fulfilled, or ended?" (*panta tauta* sunteleisthai? instead of Matthew's sunteleias *tou aiōnos*? the verb *ended*, instead of the noun *end*.) Likewise Luke, thus: ". . . . . what sign when *these things* shall come to pass?" Accordingly, "these things," or the throwing down of the stones of the temple, &c., belonged to the same event with what was called Christ's coming and the end of the world, or age.

Ver. 4. *Take heed*, &c.] not to be deceived by the impostors who were soon to appear, as foretold in the next verse.

Ver. 5. —*many shall come in my name*, &c.] before that *end*, (ver. 6,) which was the

But, should this be admitted, and should we even grant what some contend for, that in the text the disciples used the term in this rare sense, still it would not materially affect the interpretation of this chapter and the following. For it is evident that whatsoever the disciples understood by the *end of the world*, or *age*, it was something which they supposed would take place when the temple, &c., should be destroyed; and that their inquiry was *meant* to be directed to the time and circumstances of that event, and to no other period. In this sense only, did Mark and Luke understand their question; in this sense only, did Christ reply to it throughout the conversation; and in this sense only does he repeat the expression, "the end:" see ver. 6, 13, 14, and the corresponding passages in Mark and Luke.

MATT. xxiv.

ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and

MARK xiii.

shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall* not *be* yet. 8 For nation 7 shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes

LUKE xxi.

9 But when ye shall hear of wars, and com- 6 motions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end *is* not by and by, [*literally*, not immediately.] 10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise 7 against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes shall be in

subject of inquiry. Accordingly, we find, in Josephus, that, from A. D. 36 to A. D. 56, the country was full of religious impostors, who, by pretending to work miracles, and by promising the divine interposition for their deliverance, drew multitudes together, only to be dispersed and slain by the Roman soldiery. Other false prophets arose afterwards; but this seems to have been the period of their greatest prevalence. (Ant. xviii. c. iv. 1, 2. xx. c. v. 1. xx. c. viii. 5, 6. J. War, ii. c. xiii. 4, 5; also, Acts v. 36, 37. viii. 9, 10. xxi. 38.)

Ver. 6. —*wars and rumours of wars;*] see notes on the next verse. —*be not troubled,*] when ye hear of these wars, &c., as if "the end," about which you have inquired, were then to take place; "for these things must *first* come to pass, but *the end* is not immediately," (*Luke.*)

Ver. 7. *For nation shall rise . . . . . against kingdom;*] occasioning those "rumours of wars," ver. 6. The terms, *nation* and *kingdom*, were sometimes applied, by the Jews, to any state, province, or even separate municipal district. In fulfilment of these predictions, it appears that from about A. D. 48, onwards, Palestine was in a state of constant agitation. First, the Jews were alarmed by the threatening of war from the emperor Caligula, (A. D. 48.) The same year, a tumult broke out at Jerusalem, in which the Roman soldiers were attacked; also, the Galileans and people of Judea on the one hand, and the Samaritans on the other, rose against each other, but were quelled by the Roman troops. The country was filled with bands of robbers, who openly carried on their murders even in the cities; such was the public disorder! In A. D. 54, a massacre took place between the Jews and Syrians, in Cesarea, and a body of Roman troops was sent against them. Thus the outrages increased, till, in A. D. 66, an extensive revolt *of* the Jews broke forth throughout Palestine. They slaughtered the Roman garrison at Masada; new massacres

MATT. xxiv.

pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. 8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. 9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one

MARK xiii.

8 in *divers* places, and there shall be famines, and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows. 9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in

LUKE xxi.

divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights, and great signs shall there 9 be from heaven. 12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute

MATT. xxiv.

another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall

MARK xiii.

the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against [*literally*, to] them. 10 And the gospel must first be 14 published among all nations. 11 But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take

LUKE xxi.

you, delivering *you* up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. 13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony. 14 Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate

at Cesarea and Jerusalem were followed by their laying waste the province of Perea, and the cities of Tyre, Cesarea, Samaria, and Askelon; while, on the other hand, the Syrians ravaged Scythopolis, &c. (Jos. Ant. xviii. c. viii. 1, 2. War, ii. c. x.—c. xviii. Ant. xx. c. v. and vi.)—*there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes.*] Accordingly, there were, in A. D. 45, and onwards, famines in Palestine, (foretold, Acts xi. 28,) which were so severe, particularly at Jerusalem, that many perished with hunger, (Jos. Ant. xx. c. ii. 5. c. v. 2.) Of pestilences and earthquakes in Palestine, at this time, we have no account in history, unless we include Josephus's notice of an earthquake in A. D. 67, (War, iv. c. iv. 5,) which seems, however, too late a period, (see ver. 8.) As earthquakes, however, are not unfrequent in Palestine, and as pestilences are the usual concomitants of famines, we may suppose there were some of which no mention has been preserved.*

Ver. 8. —*these are the beginning of sorrows;*] the earlier and less aggravated evils. *Sorrows:* an allusion, in the original, to labour-pains.

Ver. 9. *Then,*] i. e. *in those times;* partly before, as well as after, according to Luke. —*shall they deliver you, &c.*] All this took place, as is well known from the book of Acts. —*ye shall be hated of all nations, &c.;*] not only by the Jews, but by the Gentiles also. That this, too, was verified, see Acts and the Epistles.

Ver. 10. To be *offended*, in the New Testament sense, is to be *induced to evil;* (see Matt. v. 29; xiii. 21; xviii. 6.) Many Christians, when subjected to these persecutions, would be induced to apostatise, and then to betray the others.

Ver. 11. —*false prophets, &c.*] See note on ver. 5. Probably, however, false teachers among professed Christians are here meant; of whom we have abundant mention in the Epistles of the New Testament, written just before the siege of Jerusalem.

Ver. 12. Many Christians, on seeing the apostasy and treachery of their brethren, (ver. 10,) would grow discouraged, and suspicious of each other.

Ver. 13. —*he that shall endure unto the end;*] neither overcome by persecution, nor deceived by the false teachers, nor discouraged by the defections of others, but who shall continue faithful until "the end," concerning which ye inquired, (ver. 3,) &c. —*shall be saved;*] i. e. preserved, rescued from these dangers; or, as Luke expresses it, "there shall not a hair of your head perish." Accordingly, Eusebius says that "the people of the church at Jerusalem, by the command of a divine revelation given to their principal men before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella; so that those who believed in Christ forsook Jerusalem, and holy men abandoned the royal city itself, and the *whole land of Judea.*" (Hist. Eccl. iii. 5.) Thus, they were *saved;* and after the dispersion of their bitter persecutors, the Jews, a period of relief and prosperity awaited them: as Christ told them, (according to Luke xxi. 28,) to "look up," when they should see the end of the Jewish nation, "and lift up your heads; for *your redemption draweth nigh.*"

Ver. 14. —*this gospel of the kingdom;*] of Christ's kingdom, or reign. —*shall be preached in all the world,*] before that end come; (see Mark.) *World*, in the original, *oikoumenē*,—a word which was frequently applied,

* I retain the term "earthquakes," because such is the usual meaning of the original word found here, and in Mark and Luke; but it might possibly be rendered *commotions*. Two remarks more: 1. I have confined the allusions, in the text, to Palestine: in other countries, this period was marked with wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, of which many commentators avail themselves. 2 Though I have applied these predictions thus *in minute detail*, yet, as a general rule, a prophecy, like a parable, should be interpreted more *in the gross*, and not by taking every particular separately. Even in these 6th and 7th verses, the correct way, perhaps, would be, to take the wars, rumours of wars, nation rising against nation, &c., famines, pestilences and earthquakes, as denoting only in general a time of great public commotion and distress.

MATT. xxiv.

be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

15 When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him under-

MARK xiii.

no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak
10 ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. 12 Now, the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son: and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.
9 13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my
13 name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.
15 14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him

LUKE xxi.

before, what ye shall answer. 15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. 17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. 18 But there shall not a hair of your head perish. 19 In your patience possess ye your souls.
15 20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem com-

by the New Testament writers, and Jewish authors of their day, to a large part merely of the world then known, to the extent of the Roman empire, &c.* Notwithstanding the scantiness of ecclesiastical records of that age, enough remain to show that, before the destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel was actually preached in almost every province of the Roman empire, and in some countries to the east of it. —*and then shall the end come,*] of which the disciples had inquired, (ver. 3,) the end of Jerusalem and of the Jewish nation.

Ver. 15. In this verse, Christ advertises them of the particular event which should betoken the near approach of that *end*, and be the signal for them to flee. Substituting the plainer language of Luke, for the obscurer expressions of Matthew and Mark, it was when they should "see Jerusalem compassed with armies." —*the abomination of desolation*] was accordingly, the Roman armies.—*spoken of by Daniel;*] see Dan. ix. 27; xi. 31; xii.

* It is the word used in Luke ii 1,—"There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the *world* should be taxed;" where it can, of course, include no more than the Roman empire. It is used also in Acts xi. 28; xix. 27; xxiv. 5; where it must be taken with equal, and sometimes even more, restriction. Josephus repeatedly uses it, when he means to include only the extent of an empire, and sometimes merely of a province: see Ant. viii. c. xiii 4 where he says that Ahab sent persons over all the *world* to discover the prophet Elijah; he also makes Obadiah to remind the prophet that the king had sought for him over all the *world;* though it is evident, from the nature of the case, that no more is meant than the neighbouring countries.

MATT. xxiv.

stand.) 16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house. 18 Neither let him which is in the field

MARK xiii.

that readeth understand,) then let them that 16
be in Judea flee to the mountains: 15 And 17
let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take anything out of his house: 16 And let him 18
that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17 But woe to them 19

LUKE xxi.

passed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them 16
which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the

11; where "the abomination that maketh desolate," or, as the Septuagint renders it, "the abomination of desolations," is expressly connected with the desolation of the temple and city. Josephus says, (Ant. x. c. xi. 7,) that Daniel here foretold the desolation of his country by the *Romans*, as well as by Antiochus Epiphanes; and such was probably the general opinion of the Jews. The Roman armies were an *abomination* to the Jews, for they were idolaters, and carried with them the ensigns as well as the rites of idolatry; that they also *made desolate*, needs not be shown. —*standing in the holy place;*] not in the city itself, but on the ground immediately "compassing" it, (see Luke,) which also was regarded as holy. Jerusalem was accordingly besieged by the Roman general, Cestius Gallus, in Oct. A. D. 66, who even penetrated into the lower town, and might then, says Josephus, have taken the whole city, had he persevered. But, apprehending treachery, and insidiously dissuaded by some of his officers, he suddenly retreated, to the astonishment of the Jews themselves, (J. War, ii. c. xix. 6–9.) Thus, Jerusalem was spared nearly four years longer, and abundant opportunity afforded the Christians to flee from the city and country; and this was probably the time of their flight, mentioned by Eusebius; (see notes on ver. 13.)

Ver. 16. —*them which be in Judea*, &c.;] not only those that should be in Jerusalem, but all the Christians in Judea, were then to flee, as it appears from Eusebius (see notes to ver. 13) they actually did. Josephus says that many of the most eminent Jews now swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink." (J. War, ii. c. xx. 1, and c. xix. 6.) From this time till the overthrow of the city, the whole country lay in all the horrors of a bloody anarchy; (see notes to ver. 21.)

Ver. 17, 18. Strong, hyperbolic expressions, urging them to be instant in their flight. —*let him which is on the house-top not*

MATT. xxiv.

return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning

MARK xiii.

that are with child, and to them that give
20 suck in those days! 18 And pray ye that your
21 flight be not in the winter. 19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from

LUKE xxi.

21 countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are
19 written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that
21 give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon
17 this people. [Parallel with ver. 17 and 18 of Matt. is Luke xvii. 31. In that day he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in

MATT. xxiv.

of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened.

MARK xiii.

the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.
20 And except that the Lord had shortened 22 those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

LUKE xxi.

the house, let him not come down to take it 18 away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.]

come down, &c.,] but hasten away. The houses of the Jews, like those in the same country at the present day, had flat roofs, on which the inhabitants spent much of their time; and as these roofs were often connected, they afforded a communication from one part of the city, or village, to another.— *his clothes;*] properly his tunic or robe,—a loose, flowing garment thrown over the other dress, but laid aside in the labours of the field.

Ver. 19, 20. —*woe unto them that*, &c.,] because their condition would be am impediment to their flight, and expose them to peculiar distress in the general commotion. —*that your flight be not in the winter*,] when subsistence would be difficult. Snow often falls in the hill-country of Palestine, and the cold is sometimes so great as to endanger life. —*neither on the Sabbath-day*,] when the traditions of the Jews did not allow them to travel more than about two thirds of a mile, except on extraordinary occasions; nor even then, without many hindrances.

Ver. 21. *For then*, &c.;] i. e. from that time onwards, till the actual destruction of the city; for this, it is said, in verse 29, was to take place "immediately *after* the tribulation," &c. If the *compassing of Jerusalem by armies*, (ver. 15,) was the attack made by Cestius, (A. D. 66,) this "tribulation," it would seem from the order of the prophecy, must have been in the four following years, including the final siege of the city, and ending with its capture, A. D. 70. At any rate, the whole of this period was one of indescribable distress, with the Jews; Galilee and Samaria ravaged by Vespasian, (A. D. 67,) and nearly 100,000 of the inhabitants put to the sword, so that many villages were utterly depopulated; Perea invaded and conquered, (A. D. 68;) and, more wretched than all, Judea, under a reign of terror surpassing even that of the French revolution, was invaded by the Idumeans from without, distracted with the fiercest, bloodiest factions within, overrun by immense hordes of robbers and murderers, (A. D. 67, 68,) who openly committed their massacres in the very streets of the cities and villages; and, at length, the country subdued by Vespasian, in A. D. 69. Then came the siege of Jerusalem, with its unequalled horrors. From March, A. D. 70, to the following September, multitudes without number, who had come up to the feast of the Passover, were caged within the narrow circuit of the walls, butchered by the swords of the mad factions within, as well as of the Romans without; or wasting away under a famine that at length drove mothers to devour their own children. More than one million perished in the siege and capture of the city. (J. War, b. ii. c. xx. to b. vi. c. ix.) Josephus says, "It appears to me that the misfortunes of all men, from the beginning of time, sink in comparison with those of the Jews." "Neither did any other city ever suffer such misery, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness." (J. War. Pref. 4, v. c. x. 5.) —*from the beginning of the world.*] World,—*kosmos.*

Ver. 22. Had not this tribulation been brought to a speedy end, all the inhabitants, Christians who had fled to the mountains, as well as Jews who remained behind, must have perished by famine or slaughter; as will be evident to every reader of Josephus. —*for the elect's sake*,] the believers, who are so often, in the New Testament, called the *elect*, or chosen. —*those days shall be shortened.*] Accordingly, the Jews themselves madly hastened the end of the struggle, by their mutual slaughters and devastations. After the unexpected retreat of Cestius, "there were disorders and civil wars in every city; and all those that were at quiet from the Romans, turned their hands one against another." J. War, iv. c. iii. 2.) While Titus was advancing to Jerusalem, the three factions within the city were daily butchering each other, and burning the store-houses of provisions; "as if," says Josephus, "they had done it on purpose to serve the Romans,

MATT. xxiv.

23 Then if any man shall say unto
you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe
it not. 24 For there shall arise false
Christs, and false prophets, and shall
show great signs and wonders; insomuch
that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive
the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told
you before, [*literally*, I have foretold
you.] 26 Wherefore, if they shall say

MARK xiii.

23 [21] And then, if any man shall say to you,
Lo, here *is* Christ; or, lo, *he is* there, be-
24 lieve *him* not: [22] For false Christs and
false prophets shall rise, and show signs and
wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible,

LUKE xxi.

[Parallel with ver. 23, 26, 27, 28, of
23–26 Matt. is Luke xvii. 23, 24, 37. [23] And they
shall say to you, See here! or, See there!
27 go not after *them*, nor follow them. [24] For
as the lightning that lighteneth out of the
one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the
other *part* under heaven; so also shall the

MATT. xxiv.

unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go
not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret
chambers; believe *it* not. 27 For as the
lightning cometh out of the east, and
shineth even unto the west; so shall also
the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For
wheresoever the carcass is, there will the
eagles be gathered together.

MARK xiii.

even the elect. [23] But take ye heed: behold 25
I have foretold you all things.
[24] But in those days, after that tribulation, 29
the sun shall be darkened, and the moon
shall not give her light. [25] And the stars of

LUKE xxi.

Son of man be in his day. [25] But first must
he suffer many things, and be rejected of this
generation. . . . . [26] Two *men* shall be in
the field; the one shall be taken, and the
other left. [27] And they answered and said
unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto
them, Wheresoever the body *is*, thither will 28
the eagles be gathered together.]

by destroying what the city had laid up against the siege, and by thus cutting off the nerves of their own power. . . . . So they were taken by means of the famine, *which it was impossible they should have been*, unless they had prepared the way for it by this procedure." (War, v. c. i. 4.) They continued this work of self-destruction, even during the siege, slaying great numbers, and burning entire streets. (J. War, v. c. iii–vi.) Finally, they deserted their strong holds; so that when Titus took the city, and beheld the strength of its fortifications, he exclaimed, "We certainly have had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God who drove the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of men, or any machines, do towards overthrowing these towers!" (J. War, vi. c. ix. 1.)

Ver. 23. *Then*,] in the time of that tribulation; or, perhaps, reverting indefinitely to the whole period thus far described, as preceding the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ver. 24–26. We have accounts of many such impostors in Judea, at the period referred to. An Egyptian false prophet (about A. D. 58) led 4000 out into "*the desert*;" (Acts xxi. 38;) and also persuaded a multitude in Jerusalem to go with him to the mount of Olives, whence he would make the walls of the city fall down at his command. (Jos. Ant. xx. c. viii. 6.) In the same passage, Josephus mentions other impostors, who prevailed on many to follow them into "*the desert*," where they would show "*wonders and signs*." Another impostor (about A. D. 60) seduced a multitude, "promising them freedom and deliverance from the miseries they were under, if they would but follow him as far as *the desert*." (Ant. xx. c. viii. 10.) In all these cases, the deluded followers were slain or dispersed by the Roman troops. In the siege of Jerusalem, (A. D. 70,) a false prophet persuaded the people that "God commanded them to ascend the temple, and that they should receive *signs* of their deliverance;" but the temple was burned that very day, and all his followers perished. Josephus also says, that, in the siege, "there was a great number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who announced to them that they should wait for deliverance from God; and this was in order to keep them from deserting." (War, vi. c. v. 1, 2.) One reason why these pretended deliverers, or Messiahs, were so readily believed, was, the strong persuasion among the Jews at this time, that their Messiah was then to appear. (Jos. War, vi. c. v. 4.) —*if possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*] There was no *natural* impossibility of their deceiving the Christians; otherwise Christ would not have taken so much care to forewarn his disciples. He "*foretold*" them, in order to secure them against such deception.

Ver. 27, 28. His coming would not be like that of these false Christs, merely in *the desert*, or *secret chambers*, so that it could be said, *lo here*, or *there*; but, like the lightning which lights up the whole horizon, (see Luke,) his coming would be over all the face of the land. Or, to change the figure, whithersoever the carcass of the Jewish nation extended abroad, to the same extent would his coming be seen, like a multitude of eagles devouring the dead body. There is, perhaps, no allusion intended to the eagles on the Roman standards; much less, any reference to the direction in which the Roman army approached, from east to west,—which indeed does not appear to have been the course it took. —*the coming of*, &c.] *parousia*. The Jews were accustomed to call any interposi- of divine Providence, an *appearing* (*epiphaneia*) or *coming* (*parousia*) of God.

MATT. xxiv.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth [*or* land] mourn,

MARK xiii.

heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in
30 heaven shall be shaken. [26] And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds,

LUKE xxi.

29 [24] And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. [25] And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth [*or* land] distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the

MATT. xxiv.

and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, [*Griesbach*, with a trumpet of great sound,] and they shall gather together his elect, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

MARK xiii.

with great power and glory. [27] And then 31
shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

LUKE xxi.

waves roaring; [26] Men's hearts failing them 30
for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. [27] And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. [28] And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh.

Ver. 29–31. A representation, in prophetic style, of the *end*, the actual dissolution of the Jewish state; when, as Luke expresses it in plainer language, the Jews should "fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem be trodden down of the Gentiles," &c. This fixes the event referred to. The bold, Asiatic figures here, though frequently mistaken for literal description, are no other than the Old Testament prophets habitually used in predicting the overthrow of a kingdom, or a national revolution. Thus, Isaiah represents the fall of Babylon, by the darkening of the stars, the constellations, the sun and moon, the shaking of the heavens, and the removing of the earth out of her place, (xiii.;) and, again, the destruction of Idumea, by the dissolving of the host of heaven, the rolling of the heavens together as a scroll, and by the falling of the stars like figs from a fig-tree, (xxxiv.;) Ezekiel, the fall of Egypt, by covering the heavens, and darkening the stars, sun and moon, (xxxii.;) Joel, the devastation of locusts, by the shaking of the earth and heaven, and the darkening of the sun, moon and stars; and the destruction of Jerusalem, by the turning of the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood, (ii.) (See, also, Ps. xviii.; Dan. viii. 10, &c.) Even the Latin poets, though their usual style is by no means so hyperbolical as that of the Asiatics, run into similar figures when describing great calamities. (See Ovid. Met. xv. 782; Virgil. Georg. i. 462.)

Immediately after the tribulation,] and before the end of the generation in which Christ spoke; (see ver. 34.) Accordingly, it is well known that the destruction of the Jewish state, and the dispersion of the people, "led captive into all nations," (A. D. 70,) followed *immediately* the tribulation just described, and in the life-time of some of the disciples.

—*shall the sun be darkened . . . . heavens shall be shaken;*] figures that should probably be taken together, as forming simply the usual imagery in prophecies of similar events, (see above,) and that should not be separately applied, as has often been done, making the *sun* the Mosaic religion, the *moon* the Jewish government, &c. &c. *Powers of the heavens:* same as the hosts or armies of heaven,—a poetical imagery often used by the prophets.

—*the sign of the Son of man in heaven;*] manifest evidences of his agency, in these judgments from heaven. There may be an allusion, here, to the taunting request the Jews had sometimes made, that he would show them "a sign from heaven," (Matt. xvi. 1; xii. 38;) such a sign they might at length discover, in the terrible retribution coming on them. —*shall all the tribes of the land,*] land, *gē*,—a term often applied to Palestine, or to a particular region; seldom to the earth at large. These "tribes" were, of course, the Jews. —*mourn;*] beat their breasts in anguish: such is the force of the original. —*the Son of man coming . . . . . with power and great glory.*] His power and glory were seen in the utter destruction of the Jewish state and religion, on the one hand, and on the other, in the rapid diffusion of his truth, after the overthrow of his enemies; see next ver. "Coming in the clouds of heaven," is poetic imagery, often employed by the prophets, in describing signal manifestations of divine providence; (see Deut. xxxiii. 26; Ps. xviii. 9–13; Isa. xix. 1; Dan. vii. 13; Rev. i. 7.)

—*he shall send his angels,*] alluding *indirectly*, perhaps, to the ministry of his preachers,*

* The indirect allusion is favoured by the ambiguity of the word rendered *angels*, which sometimes means simply

MATT. xxiv.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even at* the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass,

MARK xiii.

32 [28] Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:
33 [29] So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is
34 nigh, *even* at the doors. [30] Verily, I say unto you, That this generation shall not pass, till

LUKE xxi.

32 [29] And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; [30] When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your ownselves that summer is now nigh at hand.
33 [31] So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of
34 God is nigh at hand. [32] Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till

which should then spread abroad so widely; though we must not forget that the highly poetic imagery of heavenly powers is still continued, as is evident from the rest of the expressions in this verse. The general fact referred to, in the verse, is manifestly this: that there should be a great and public ingathering of converts, in all nations over the face of the earth, from the time when the Jewish nation should be destroyed. It would be a time of relief, of "redemption," to the Christians, as Luke expresses it, so that they should "look up, and lift up their heads." —*with a trumpet of great sound;*] imagery taken from the custom of the Jews to call the people together, or to proclaim their jubilee, &c. by the sound of trumpet; (Lev. xxv. 9; Num. x. 2; Judg. iii. 27, vi. 34.) —*from the four winds . . . . . the other;*] i. e. from every quarter throughout the world.

Ver. 32, 33. To illustrate, more familiarly, how promptly "the end" would follow the signs he had specified, and with what certainty the disciples might trace its approach, Christ now frames a parable from the fig-tree, which abounded on the mount of Olives, where they were sitting. —*know that it is near, &c.;*] viz. the coming of the Son of man, or, as Luke says, "the kingdom of God;" which, though already begun, was not to come *with power*, till the overthrow of the Jewish polity; (see Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Mark viii. 38, ix. 1; Luke ix. 26, 27, &c.*)

MATT. xxiv.

till all these things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. 37 But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days

MARK xiii.

all these things be done. [31] Heaven and earth 35
shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.
[32] But of that day and *that* hour knoweth 36

LUKE xxi.

all be fulfilled. [33] Heaven and earth shall 35
pass away: but my words shall not pass away.
[Parallel with ver. 37–41, of Matt. is Luke
xvii. 26–30, 34, 35. [26] And as it was in the 37
days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of
the Son of man. [27] They did eat, they drank,
they married wives, they were given in mar-

Ver. 34. Accordingly, Jerusalem was taken, A. D. 70, on the 8th of September, about thirty-seven years after the delivery of this prophecy, while St. John, and probably the greater part of the other apostles, were still alive, as well as multitudes of the first converts and contemporary Jews. With the fall of the city, the conflict ceased, that had raged so long and so terribly; but its scattered embers continued to burn in Judea for about a year and a half afterwards, when they went out in the total extinction or dispersion of the rejected race.

Ver. 35. A form of vehement assertion; the meaning of which according to the most approved interpreters, is, "Heaven and earth shall *sooner* pass away, *than* my word." See Matt. v. 18, for a similar form. See Rosenmüller, Kuinoel, &c.

Ver. 36. —*of that day and hour;*] i. e. the precise time. The phrase ought to be taken thus, as a whole, instead of separating the two terms, *day* and *hour*, as some have done. —*knoweth no one;*] (see Mark.) Christ did indeed know that it would be before the end of that generation, (see ver. 34,) but still the *precise* time was unknown.

Ver. 37–39. It would be, however, like the

messengers; so it is indeed translated in Mark i. 2: Luke vii. 24, 27, ix. 52; James ii. 25; and so it is often used in the Septuagint.

* Dr. Warburton says "this prophecy doth not respect Christ's *second* coming to judgment, but his *first*, in the abolition of the Jewish policy, and the establishment of the Christian: that kingdom of Christ which commenced on the total ceasing of the theocracy. For, as God's reign over the Jews entirely ended with the abolition of the temple-service, so the reign of Christ, *in spirit and in truth*, had then its first beginning. This was the true *establishment* of Christianity; not that effected by the donations or conversions of Constantine Till the Jewish law was abolished, over which the *Father* presided as King, the reign of the *Son* could not take place; because the sovereignty of Christ over mankind was that very sovereignty of God over the Jews, transferred and more largely extended. This, therefore, being one of the most important eras in the economy of grace, and the most awful revolution in all God's religious dispensations, we see the elegance and propriety of the terms in question to denote so great an event, together with the destruction of Jerusalem by which it was effected. For, in the old prophetic language, the change and fall of principalities and powers, whether spiritual or civil, are signified by the shaking heaven and earth, the darkening the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars; as the rise and establishment of new ones are by procession in the clouds of heaven, by the sound of trumpet, and the assembling together of hosts and congregations." Div. Leg. vol. ii. b. iv. sect. 4, quoted by Bp. Newton.

MATT. xxiv.

that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark. 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

MARK xiii.

no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.
42-44 [33] Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

LUKE xxi.

rinage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. [28] Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; [29] But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed
39 *them* all: [30] Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. [31] In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not
40 come down, &c. . . . . [34] I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. [35] Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.]

days of Noah, in one respect, viz. it would come unexpectedly on the people, notwithstanding the abundant warnings, and overtake them unprepared. Accordingly, we find in every stage of the Jewish war, as related by Josephus, that the multitude were confident of ultimate success, continuing, with a desperate infatuation, to trust in their impostors and false Messiahs, one after another, who promised them the miraculous protection of Heaven. "Now, what did most elevate them in undertaking this war," says Josephus, "was an ambiguous oracle that was found also in their sacred writings, *that about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.* The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. . . . . However, it is not possible for men to avoid fate, although they see it beforehand. But these men interpreted some of these signals according to their own pleasure, and some of them they utterly despised, until their madness was demonstrated, both by the taking of the city, and their own destruction." J. War, b. vi. c. v. 4. —*so shall also the coming* (paronsia) *of the Son of man be.*] i. e. so unexpectedly.

Ver. 40, 41. Here are two cases, very strongly stated, to illustrate the idea expressed in the preceding verses, and to signify, in general, how critical and difficult would then be the chance of escape. —*Two women shall be grinding at the mill.*] It was then, as now, the custom in the East for women to grind the bread-stuffs by hand-mills. These consisted of two circular stones fitted together, of which the upper one had a hole in the centre to admit the corn, and was, by means of a handle, rapidly moved around on the lower, which was fixed. The word *women* should not have been italicised by our translators, since it is sufficiently implied in the original.

Ver. 42–44. From all the considerations just stated, it became the urgent duty of the disciples to "watch," so that the event might not take them unawares, as it would the people at large; (see Luke.) If a householder, who knew in what part of the night the thief was to come, would watch to prevent his house from being broken open, still more ought the disciples to be constantly vigilant, since, as he had already told them, (ver. 36,) the precise time was unknown.

MATT. xxiv.

42 Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh. 45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46 Blessed *is* that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not

MARK xiii.

[34] *For the Son of man is* [or, *It is*] as a 45–47
man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. [35] Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight,

LUKE xxi.

[34] And take heed to yourselves, lest at 42–44
any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. [35] For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth, [*or*, on the face of the whole

MATT. xxiv.

for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

MARK xiii.

or at the cock crowing, or in the morning:
48–51 36 Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.

LUKE xxi.

45–51 land.] 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Ver. 45–51. In this parable, Christ proceeds to illustrate the consequences that would result to his disciples themselves, from their fidelity on the one hand, or from their infidelity on the other. Should they continue, like devoted servants, faithful to their responsible trust, till his coming, here described, they would then be blessed and honoured. Their devotion to him, and their faithfulness to their charge, would lead them of course to heed the admonitions he had just given them, to "watch," and to take the precautions of safety he had enjoined. But if any of them, like evil servants, should grow negligent after a while, and begin to think that his coming was not at hand, (since it did not take place immediately,) and should give themselves up to the lusts of the world, the day would come upon them suddenly and unawares, as on the unbelievers, and they would share the fate of the Jews. They would have their "*portion with the hypocrites*" of that age, notwithstanding their profession of his name. —*shall cut him asunder*,] or, perhaps, *shall cut him off*, discard him, as some interpreters render it. —*there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*;] a phrase which Christ had often used to describe the dreadful sufferings of the Jews; (see Matt. viii. 22; xiii. 42, 50; xxii. 13.)

REMARK.—It can hardly be necessary to remind the reader, that the division of chapters and verses is a modern invention, and that the text originally stood in one unbroken mass. Accordingly, this 25th chapter was originally attached to the end of the 24th, without any break or mark of distinction. That it is but a *continuation* of the same discourse, appears from its having no proper beginning of its own; and from its referring, at the very commencement, to some particular time just mentioned; and also from the fact that, according to the combined testimonies of Mark and Matthew, both the 24th and

MATT. xxv.

1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bride-

25th chapters were spoken by Christ on the same day.*

In explaining the 24th chapter, we had important help from the parallel records of Mark and Luke. We must now forego such assistance; for both Mark and Luke omit what is contained in this 25th chapter of Matthew. Indeed, if we look back, we shall see that they already began to *abbreviate* their records as they drew near that point in Christ's discourse which answers to the end of the preceding, or 24th chapter; for Luke leaves out the two parabolical illustrations there introduced, and Mark but just glances at them. It seems to have been their plan to give only what may be called the body of the prophecy, and to pass by the parables and amplifications, which, though useful for the purpose of fuller illustration, were not essential to the understanding of the general subject. Hence, probably, their omission of the three parables in this 25th chapter, as well as of the two shorter parables in the end of the 24th chapter.

Ver. 1. *Then, &c.*;] at that time, i. e. the time of which he had just been speaking so largely, in chap. xxiv.,—the time of the destruction of the Jewish state. Many interpreters suppose that here the discourse takes a sudden leap, over some thousands of years, onwards to the consummation of all things! —a supposition that sets at nought all the laws of coherence in discourse, besides being forbidden by the express reference to time with which the verse begins. —*shall the kingdom of heaven*;] Christ's kingdom; meaning here, however, its subjects, his professed adherents; just as we often use the term *kingdom* for the people belonging to such kingdom. —*be likened unto ten virgins*;] his disciples, like these virgins, would all indeed look for the coming of their Lord, (for they all knew that it was at hand;) but, like these virgins, again, some of them would be foolish, and some of them wise, in their manner of providing for the crisis. The wise would have all things in readiness to meet the event. The foolish would be so negligent in

* Mark, having closed his chapter that is parallel with the 24th of Matthew, resumes his narrative in these words: "*After two days* was the feast of the Passover and of unleavened bread; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast-day," &c. (Mark xiv. 1, 2, compare xiii.) So, too, Matthew, having closed both his 24th and 25th chapters, proceeds thus: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, [viz. those in the 24th and 25th chapters,] he said unto his disciples, Ye know that *after two days* is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast-day," &c. (Matt. xxvi. 1–5. See, also, Luke xxii. 1–6, compare xxi.) Accordingly, both the 24th and 25th chapters were spoken two days before the Passover.

MATT. XXV.

groom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. 3 They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out, [*literally*, are going out.]

MATT. XXV.

9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so;* lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour.

their precautions, that it would overtake them but half prepared; and then it would leave no time to complete their arrangements, but involve them in the common calamity. Hence the urgency of the injunction, "Watch, therefore," (this is the point, the *moral*, of the whole parable,) "for ye know neither the day nor the hour," (ver. 13.) Such appears to be the idea signified.

Ver. 2. —*five . . . were wise, and five were foolish.*] The whole number is thus divided into two *equal* parts; probably because this was the simplest manner of division, in framing the parable; and not that such would be the ratio between the numbers respectively of the wise and foolish disciples.

Ver. 3, 4. The lamps, say some, represented their *profession*; the oil, *divine grace*:—a puerile mode of interpreting! as though the parable must of course "run on all-four," or involve a significant representation in every separate member. Now, in all parables, there are many particulars necessary to the frame-work of the story, which have nothing directly corresponding in the subject signified; and, here, the lamps and oil are probably introduced only because they belonged to the equipage of a nuptial procession, and because the exclusion of the foolish virgins, in the present case, turned partly on them. The reference, or *moral*, should always be deduced from the tenor of the parable taken as a whole, and not from the minute parts.

Ver. 5, 6. *While the bridegroom tarried, &c.:*] the meaning is, that his "tarrying" was the *occasion* of their growing drowsy and falling asleep. His "coming" is put forward to a later hour, (midnight), than was, perhaps, usual. This gave time for the slumbering of the virgins, and the going out of the unfed lamps; and it made it necessary that there should be the more urgent haste when he did appear. All these circumstances are probably to be regarded as significant in relation only to the *delay* of Christ's coming, (which seeming delay, is repeatedly spoken of,—xxiv. 6, 48; xxv. 19,) and to the importance of constant readiness. The coming of Christ, here signified, did not take place till about thirty-seven years after the delivery of this prophecy.

Ver. 7. We observe, once for all, that the general features of this parable were taken from contemporary Jewish customs. We have, indeed, but little direct and positive information of the manner in which the Jews solemnized their marriages; yet we gather, out of a mass of second-hand statements, presumptive evidence, hints, &c., that it was a frequent practice for the bridegroom to conduct the bride home, at evening, with attendants bearing flambeaux. When arrived at his house, the train was admitted to the nuptial feast, and the door shut against strangers.

Ver. 8, 9. The conversation here, between the two parties, as well as the following circumstance of the foolish virgins going to buy, &c., appears to have no other bearing on the significance of the parable, than to present, in a stronger light, the importance of complete preparation, by showing that if this were neglected till the crisis arrived, it would then be useless to seek help from others, or to make up for previous remissness.

Ver. 10–12. —*and the door was shut;*] as appears to have been the custom on such occasions. —*I know you not:*] since they did not enter with his train, he regarded them as strangers, and they were to fare as strangers. As to the historical facts signified in these verses, the vigilant Christians would "be saved," received into a state of security, at the coming of their Lord to destroy the Jews. (See note on Matt. xxiv. 13.) It would be to them a time of "redemption," when they should "look up, and lift up their heads." (See note on Matt. xxiv. 31, and the parallel place in Luke.) On the other hand, the negligent Christians, who should not take the necessary precautions in season, would of course share in the ruin of the Jews.

Ver. 13. *Watch, therefore; for, &c.*] Here is the point at which the whole parable aims; the point which he had so earnestly enforced in the 24th chapter, thus: "Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your lord doth come;" and, again, "therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." (xxiv. 42, 44.) —*ye know neither the day nor the hour*] of the time he had just been speaking of, in the

14 For *the kingdom of heaven is* [*rather*, For *it is*] as a man travelling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents. 17 And likewise he

that *had received* two, he also gained other two. 18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done,

24th chapter. Our English version, following the Received Text, adds, "*wherein the Son of man cometh*;" but this clause is rejected as spurious by Griesbach, and most of the later critics.

REMARK.—It should be observed, that three of the successive parables in this prophecy, viz. that in the end of the 24th chapter, this of the virgins, and the next of the talents, appear designed to represent the case exclusively of the *disciples* or *Christian converts* themselves, in relation to Christ's coming at the destruction of the Jews. These parables are distinguished, however, by the following peculiarities: In the first, a sober, correct discharge of stewardship is contrasted with recklessness, debauchery, and abusive administration; in the second, a wise precaution is opposed to foolish oversight; in the third, or that of the talents, we shall find an enterprising devotion to the interests of the master contrasted with repining slothfulness. How far we ought to carry these minute distinctions into the *application* of the several parables, may be a question: whether we are to look for several classes of Christians at that time, answering respectively to all these different characters, in detail; or whether we are to take the several representations together as denoting, in a more general way, the faithful Christians with their deliverance on the one hand, and the unfaithful Christians with their fate on the other. We have adopted the former plan, choosing to err on the side rather of particularity than of generalization. A middle course, perhaps, would better comport with the usual character of parables.

Ver. 14. *For it was a man, &c.*;] i. e. the case, in general, on which he had been speaking, might again be represented thus, &c. Christ here proceeds with another parable, to illustrate the consequences which would be visited on his disciples and followers, for their devoted activity, or slothfulness, in the trust committed to them. He, their Lord, was about to depart, (it was then only three days before his crucifixion,) and to leave them in charge of his cause. But he was to return "after a long time;" (his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem was about thirty-seven years afterwards;) and then they would fare according to their faithfulness. Those who had abounded in the work of their Lord would be promoted to wider spheres of influence in his kingdom, and enjoy a season of "redemption," when they should "look up, and lift up their heads." (See note on Matt. xxiv. 31.) Those who had become disaffected, and had neglected his work, would be cast off with the Jews. Such, indeed, we may here add, would be, in a great measure, the *natural* consequences; for hearty devotion to his cause would naturally cherish the remembrance of these his most solemn warnings, and induce them to heed the signs of the times, he had pointed out; while a grudging neglect of their duty would naturally be attended with disregard of his admonitions on this subject as well as on others. That something of this kind must actually have occurred at the time referred to, will be evident to every one who considers the known circumstances of the case.

Ver. 15. *—five talents.*] A Jewish talent of silver is estimated at a little more than $1500. The specific number *five* belongs, doubtless, to the frame-work only of the parable; and so likewise the numbers *two* and *one*. There is, however, this moral conveyed, viz. that whether the means placed in their hands were great or small, the Christians would be treated according to their improvement or neglect of them.

Ver. 21. *—thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things;*] i. e. promote him to a wider sphere of activity and influence; not absolve him from all obligation to further exertion, as some imagine; but "make him ruler over many things," instead of the fewer things hitherto under his charge. And it is evident, from the nature of the case, that the faithful Christians must have found their field of enterprise greatly enlarged, as well as meliorated, when they were relieved from the rage of persecution by the overthrow of the Jews, and when the great obstacle to the progress of the gospel was thus removed. Then it was that "the kingdom of God came *with power*," (Mark ix. 1,) and operated with increased energy. *—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;*] i. e. share in his joy; as it is evident the Christians must have done at the time of their "redemption," when they "looked up, and lifted up their heads." (See note on Matt. xxiv. 31.)

REMARK.—Luke has preserved a parable, delivered two or three days before the pre-

thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came, and said, Lord, I knew thee

that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed; 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine. 26 His lord answered, and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed; 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury, [*literally*, with interest.] 28 Take, therefore, the talent from him,

sent, which is so like this, in every one of its significant points, that it affords much help in the way of illustration; especially as it is somewhat fuller and more explicit. We shall *italicize* the circumstances which point out its aim, and the additional particulars which go to determine its application. When Christ was coming from Jericho to Jerusalem, and had arrived near the mount of Olives, on his way to his triumphal entrance into the city, (which was two or three days before he delivered the prophecy under examination,) he "spake a parable [to the people] *because he was nigh to Jerusalem*, and *because they thought that the kingdom of God should* IMMEDIATELY *appear*. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country *to receive for himself a kingdom*, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. *But his citizens* [not his servants] *hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us*. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, *having received the kingdom*, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every one had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have laid up in a napkin; for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, *Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee*, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore, then, gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury [*literally*, with interest?] And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds; (and they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds!) for I say unto you, that unto every one which hath, shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. *But those mine enemies*, [viz. the citizens,] *which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me*." (Luke xix. 11–27.) This parable, then, (which so manifestly represents the same general subject, as the one in the text,) was spoken by Christ for two reasons: 1. "because he was nigh to Jerusalem;" and, 2. "because the people thought that the kingdom of God should *immediately* appear," and it was desirable to correct this misapprehension. Of, course, the parable had some special reference to Jerusalem; and it referred, also, to the period when the kingdom of God was to come, at the destruction of the Jews. (See note on Matt. xxiv. 32, 33.) Accordingly, the time of the Lord's return to reckon with his servants, in the parable, is expressly said to be when he should have "received his kingdom;" that is, when the Son of man should come in his kingdom, before some of those standing there should have tasted of death. (See Matt. xvi. 28.) Again, besides the case of the *servants*, (or professed followers of Christ,) which is the general subject of both parables, we find here another party introduced, which is not mentioned in Matthew, viz. the *citizens*, or countrymen of our Lord, the Jews, who would not have him to reign over them, and who were *to be slain*, at the time when the *servants* were to be called to their account. All these circumstances and allusions fix the reference of this parable to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and confirm the explanation we have traced out of the similar parable in the text.

Ver. 26. —*thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not*, &c.;] i. e. I will take thee on thine own plea, or, "out of thine own mouth will I judge thee:" if, as thou sayest, thou knewest this, so much the more it behoved thee to improve what I did commit to thee, so as to answer at least my just demands. We are

and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant

into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the [holy *spurious, according to Griesbach*] angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his

not to suppose that the master here confirms the allegation of this "wicked and slothful servant."

Ver. 29. A proverb, repeatedly used by Christ, (see Matt. xiii. 12; Luke viii. 18; xix. 26;) and introduced here as expressing the general principle on which the transfer, awarded in the preceding verse, was made: "give it unto him which hath ten talents, *for* unto every one," &c. It is a general rule of Providence, that possessions accumulate to greater possessions, and that want grows into destitution; especially in cases like the present, where the receiver is held responsible for the use of advantages committed to him. —*from him that hath not;*] either a strong negative for *hath but little*, or an elliptical expression for *hath not what is required of him;* since it is immediately added, "shall be taken away even *that which he hath.*"

Ver. 30. —*cast . . . . . into outer darkness;*] probably, into prison. Among the Romans, (who then had the jurisdiction of Palestine,) prisons were sometimes dungeons under ground, and consequently in utter darkness. (Rosenmüller in Matt. viii. 12.) Many interpreters however, understand the expression thus: cast him forth into the darkness of night without, from the hall which was lighted for a feast. But the "weeping and gnashing of teeth," which follows, seems to denote rather a prison. —*there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;*] the natural consequence of confinement in such a dungeon. It is the same phrase, and apparently with the same reference, that was used just before, concerning the unfaithful servant, in the end of the 24th chapter. (See Note on Matt. xxiv. 51.) We need not say that no figure could more truly represent the condition to which unfaithful Christians must have been reduced, when they found themselves, with the unbelieving Jews, involved in the "great tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the world to that time." (Matt. xxiv. 21.)

Ver. 31. The remainder, at least, of this chapter is referred by nearly all interpreters, to the yet future end of time,*—a period widely separated from the one previously treated of, and an event altogether foreign to the general subject. It is well known with what difficulty and mutual disagreement, they select the point where the discourse leaps over such a huge interval both of time and subject, and with what violence they are obliged to break up the connection, fix the point of transition where they will. Nothing, however, can be plainer from the context, than that there is no such point of transition, in the discourse. —*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him,*] which he had, but just before, told them should take place in that generation: see Matt. xxiv. 30, 31, 34, where we find "the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," and sending his angels, &c. all within that generation. (See, also, xxiv. 37, 39, 42, 44.) It should be observed that Christ now only *repeats* his former phraseology; and, of course, he means the same as before. He repeats it in order to fix anew the attention of his disciples on the period and train of events he had already so abundantly defined.* —*then,*] viz. at that time of his coming. —*shall he sit upon the*

* Not by *all*, however. Some of the American Unitarians refer it, apparently, to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. (See Norton's Statement of Reasons, &c. Appendix, particularly pp. 311, 312; and Furness's Jesus and his Biographers, pt. ii. chap. v. particularly p. 201.) Rev. Newcome Cappe, an English Unitarian, refers it explicitly to that time, and traces out its context accordingly. Bishop Pearce, one of the greatest critics the Church of England has produced, does the same; though he afterwards remarks, inconsistently enough, that, in ver. 41 and 46, "Jesus seems at length to have had the day of general judgment in his thoughts." Dr. Hammond, also of the Church of England, and for a long time the standard commentator in our language, refers it *partly* to the destruction of Jerusalem, though principally to a day of general judgment hereafter. (See Paige's Selections, *in loco.*) Among the European *continental* interpreters and theologians, J. Harduin applies it to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and says, "the sheep" are those Jews who had either been converted, or had kindly treated the converts; "the goats," those Jews who had neither been converted, nor shown kindness to the Christians. C. F. Bahrdt applies it to the same time, and refers the *separation* mentioned in it, to the distinction then made, not between different classes of the Jews, but between the Christians on the one hand, and their enemies on the other. So likewise does E. F. C. Oertel To the same time, and nearly in the same manner, do J. F. Des Cotes, and G. L. Horn apply it. C. C. L. Schmidt thinks it was designed to set forth the effect which the destruction of their nation and temple would have on the Jews, in converting some to Christianity, and plunging the rest into despair. J C. R. Eckermann refers it to the complete separation which took place between the Christian and the Jewish communities, after the destruction of Jerusalem. J. F. Gruner and J. N. Milow explain it nearly as Harduin does, of the conversion of the better disposed among the Jews, after the destruction of their country, and of the utter rejection of the rest. (See Kellii Opuscula Academica *De Argumento Loci* Matt. xxv. 31-46, pp. 142-144.)

* Commentators are, for the most part, agreed, that his coming to judgment, mentioned in Matt. xxiv. 29-31, was his coming to the destruction of the Jewish people. Still, they seem to think that passage a striking exception to the general rule, and that he *usually* means a day of universal judgment hereafter, when he speaks of such a coming. Now, there are a few facts which, we think, will correct this impression. 1. In all of the four Gospels, there are ten cases only in which he mentions what is called his second coming, or any coming whatsoever subsequent to his ascension, viz. Matt. x. 23; xvi. 27, 28; xxiv, xxv. (which we put together, being but one discourse,) xxvi. 64. Mark viii. 38, with ix. 1; xiii. Luke ix 26, 27; xvii. 20 to 37; xxi. John xxi. 20 to 23. Several of these are indeed parallel texts. 2. In every one of these passages, except two, viz. Matt. xxvi. 64, and Luke xvii. 20 to 37,) his coming is *expressly* fixed to that generation, or to a time before some of those then living, should die. 3. Even in the two passages we have excepted, no other time is specified or alluded to. One of them is unquestionably parallel with part of Matt. xxiv. and the other

glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but

throne of his glory;] a Hebraism, for "his glorious throne." Among the Orientals, the throne is the symbol both of the regal and judicial functions united; the idea therefore is, Then shall he appear *as king and judge;* which is the same thing he had taught on other occasions, viz. that, before the end of that generation, he would come *in his kingdom*, his kingdom would come *with power*, and that he would then *reward men according to their works.* (Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Mark ix. 1.) Indeed, the whole tenor of the four Gospels shows that he did not consider his kingdom fully "come" upon earth, nor his character of king and judge properly realized, till the overthrow of the Jewish polity, in the end of that age.

Ver. 32. —*before him shall be gathered,* &c.;] a figure manifestly taken, like most of the figures in this representation, from the customs of eastern courts, before which the parties under trial are arraigned, *in propria præsentia.* But as neither a visible throne, nor a formal assembling before it, belongs to the processes of divine justice, the simple meaning evidently is,—shall then be made the subjects of his special retributive administration. The prophets, as is well known, habitually employ the imagery of a throne, with angelic attendants and the congregated nations, in their descriptions of divine judgments on states and parties. —*all nations;*] or, more literally, "all the nations;" used here merely in the popular sense in which Christ just before used the same phrase, in Matt. xxiv. 9 and 14, where he told his disciples that they should be hated of "all the nations," and that their preaching should be for a witness to "all the nations," before the destruction of Jerusalem. These nations, not only Jews, but Gentiles also, would now be the subjects of his retributive administration. —*shall separate them,*] viz. the *people* of those

probably refers to the same subject. Such are the facts with respect to Christ's doctrine on this point.

Some of these texts, in which he speaks of coming to judgment, are so strikingly illustrative of the one under consideration, that they must not be passed over with a mere reference. "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matt. xvi. 27, 28.) "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark viii. 38; ix. 1.) "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God." (Luke ix. 26, 27.)

the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 For I was an

nations. The pronoun, in the original, does not refer immediately to the word *nations*, it being of a different gender. (Winer, Grammatik des neutest. Sprach. S. 126.) They should be placed in separate conditions, according to their different courses of conduct described in the sequel. —*as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.*] The figure in this clause and in the next verse has occasioned the entire paragraph to be called the parable of the sheep and goats,—a title not warranted, however, by the incidental use of a single simile and metaphor of this kind; especially, since nearly all the imagery, throughout the representation, is taken from a very different source, viz. from the usages of Oriental kings.

Ver. 33. —*on his right hand;*] the place of favour and honour. —*on the left;*] the place of disfavour. These figures are, of course, but parts of the imagery, and denote only, in a general way, that one party was to be approved, and the other condemned.

Ver. 34. The forms of regal judicature are still continued by representing the king as pronouncing vocally, in solemn and formal verdict, his award to the first party. —*inherit the kingdom,*] viz. the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of God, which Christ had told the Jews, on another occasion, when referring to this very time, "shall be taken from you, and given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. xxi. 43.) They were now introduced, for the first time, to its privileges; of course, they had not before enjoyed the inheritance, had not belonged to Christ's kingdom. —*prepared for you from the foundation of the world;*] World,—*kosmos.* In the divine counsel, this kingdom, or the gospel, had always been designed for them, though they received an inheritance in it only at so late a period. The phrase, "prepared for you," &c. was a proverbial one, as we find from the book of Tobit, where the angel says to him, concerning his wife, "she was prepared for thee from the beginning of time;" (*apo tou aiōnos*, Tobit vi. 17;) i. e. was always designed for him in the divine counsel. The phrase in the text may, therefore, refer only in the same general way to the fore-orderings of Providence; although it is, indeed, a specific truth, asserted in other Scriptures, that the original promise of the gospel expressly embraced the Gentiles.

Ver. 35, 36. The king is represented as proceeding to specify the immediate reason *why* he awarded the inheritance to them. It was, as he here expresses it, because they had affectionately ministered to the king, that is, to the Messiah.

hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee?* or, thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?* 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the king shall answer,

and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer

Ver. 37–39. —*the righteous,*] or just, (*dikaioi;*) meaning, either *comparatively* just, or that they were justified on that occasion, in contradistinction to the other party, which was condemned. They, however, are represented as totally unconscious of having served the Messiah, or of having paid him any attention whatsoever. This circumstance must be carefully remarked; because it is here brought forward as one of their distinguishing characteristics.

Ver. 40. Nor does the king himself imply, when he comes now to state his meaning more definitely, that they had ever paid any attention directly to the Messiah. But they had received his disciples, and ministered to them; all of which he *accounted* as done to himself. And this was all that he really intended in his previous declaration. It was on this ground alone that the inheritance was now awarded to them. —*unto one of the least of these my brethren.*] Here, be it observed, is a third party brought into view, viz. the brethren of the king, or the disciples of Christ. These were not arraigned as subjects of his trial: their case had already been sufficiently represented, in the preceding parables. In the present scene, they were not a party concerned; were neither on the right hand, nor on the left. Of course, those on the right hand represent a class of people who had not been disciples of Christ, nor recognized a Messiah; but who had nevertheless kindly received and treated his disciples, and who were at that time admitted to the blessings of Christ's kingdom. And it is well known that we find such a class among the Gentiles of that age; who were then received, moreover, into the covenant of the gospel, and, in the striking language of the text, made to "inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." The kingdom of God was taken from the Jews, and given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. (Matt. xxi. 43.)

Ver. 41. The forms of eastern judicature are still continued, and sentence is pronounced on those on the left hand. As those on the right were called "ye blessed of my Father," these are now called "ye cursed." —*depart from me;*] denoting their rejection. —*into everlasting fire,* (*eis to pur to aiōnion;*)] denoting a long-enduring state of tribulation. Fire is the favourite metaphor, in the New Testament as well as in the Old, to represent the sufferings of nations and communities, or the divine judgments. For this purpose had John the Baptist used it, ("unquenchable fire,") with reference to the time alluded to in the text. (Matt. iii. 12.) So likewise had Christ, with reference to the troubles that followed his ministry: "I am come to send fire on the earth." (Luke xii. 49, comp. Matt. x. 34.) We need not quote other examples, particularly from that storehouse, the book of Revelation; nor refer to the Old Testament, where they are known to abound in such profusion.* *Everlasting,* or *aiōnion;* often applied to things of the present life. —*prepared for the devil and his angels;*] an allusion to the contemporary Jewish opinions; as in the parable of the wheat and tares, Matt. xiii. 37–43; also Rev. xx.

Ver. 42, 43. As in the former case, the king is here represented as proceeding to specify the grounds of his decision; which were, that they had not ministered to the king, i. e. to the Messiah.

Ver. 44. They, however, were surprised at this charge, confident that they had been faithfully devoted to the cause of their king, or Messiah; they even challenged the proof of delinquency in this respect. Their self

* To exemplify still further the frequency and extent of application with which the Jews, just before Christ's time, were accustomed to employ this figure, we subjoin a summary of its use in the Apocrypha, where it denotes merely temporal judgments or sufferings. Many of the expressions will be found to bear a close affinity with the phraseology of such controverted passages as our text, and may help to explain them. "The vengeance on the ungodly is fire and worms; in the congregation of the ungodly, a flame is kindled, and, in a rebellious nation, wrath is set on fire; the congregation of the wicked is like tow wrapped together, and the end of them is a flame of fire to destroy them; let the heathen nations be consumed by the rage of fire; an evil tongue burneth as a flame of fire, and shall not be quenched; the lewd shall be a heritage to moths and worms; they kindle a fire in their flesh; a hot mind is as a burning fire, which will never be quenched till it be consumed; as a punishment upon Babylon, fire shall come down upon her from the Everlasting, long to endure, and she shall be inhabited of demons for a long time; the hardships which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob suffered were their trial by fire; woe to the nations that rise up against the Jews! the Lord Almighty will punish them in a day of judgment, putting fire and worms in their flesh, and they shall feel and weep forever," (*eōs aiōnos.*)

him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto

you, inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

assurance, contrasted as it is with the total unconsciousness evinced by those on the right hand, is made a prominent feature in their character, and is important for ascertaining the class of people here intended.

Ver. 45. In reply to their challenge, the king alleges no *direct* delinquency on their part, and does not maintain his charge in the *prima facie* sense in which they understood it, but explains it merely of their cruel neglect of his brethren, or of the disciples of Christ; and this he accounted as neglect of himself. These on the left accordingly represent a people who thought themselves faithful to the cause of their expected Messiah, and who had, in fact, been punctilious in what they regarded as his service, but had mistreated those that proved to be his disciples. This was their guilt. It scarcely need be observed, that we find this description realized, with striking exactness, in the religious Jews, who were rejected of God at that time, and doomed to a state of alienation and suffering, which has not yet ceased.

Ver. 46. —*into everlasting punishment*, (*eis kolasin aiōnion;*] see note on ver. 41 and 45. *eternal life*, (*zoēn aiōnion;*) i. e. the life of the gospel, as the phrase often means; thus, "This is life eternal, (*aiōnios zoē*,) that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life," (*zoēn aiōnion.*) (John iii. 36.) "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, (*zoēn aiōnion*,) and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life." (John v. 24.) In other places, also, Christians are said to have passed from death into life, (*eis zoēn.*)

REMARK.—It has sometimes been contended that, since the most of the Jews (the Pharisees) of Christ's time held an eternal retribution for mankind after death, he must have been understood to teach the same idea, when he spoke of "everlasting fire" and "everlasting punishment," because these are the leading terms of that doctrine, and associated with it by common usage. They are, indeed, the leading terms of our *modern* doctrine of endless misery; but it is worthy of special notice, that they do not appear to have been thus appropriated by the *ancient Jews*, who, so far as we can ascertain, employed other terms and other figures to signify that idea; so that they would not understand Christ to speak of that subject, when he used neither the phraseology nor the representations which *they* connected with the doctrine, to say nothing of the evident tenour of the context.

THE END.

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

BY T. SOUTHWOOD SMITH, M. D.

---

* * "Beholding, in the sacred light
Of his essential reason, all the shapes
Of swift contingence, all successive ties
Of action, propagated through the sum
Of possible existence—he at once,
Down the long series of eventful time,
So fixed the dates of being—so disposed,
To every living soul of every kind,
The field of motion, and the hour of rest,
That all conspired to his supreme design—
TO UNIVERSAL GOOD!"

PHILADELPHIA:
GIHON, FAIRCHILD & CO.
1843.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

FOURTH LONDON EDITION.

The more I have contemplated the view of the divine character and government which is exhibited in the following pages, and the more the engagements of life have brought me acquainted with the wants of the human mind in this state of discipline, and therefore of vicissitude and suffering, the more deep has become my conviction, that, were the opinions which it is the object of this work to establish, generally believed and considered, they would promote, in an incalculable measure, the virtue and happiness of mankind. This conviction coincides with that of the wisest and best men whom I have the pleasure of knowing. My sense of the importance of rendering this view of the moral government of the Deity as complete as possible, is therefore stronger than ever; and under this impresssion, I have entered, in this edition, into a more close and connected investigation of the origin, the nature, and the tendency of evil. I have considered, separately and in detail, the several classes of evil, namely, natural and moral evil, and the evils which have hitherto been found inseparable from the social state, namely, poverty, dependence, and servitude. I have endeavoured to show why these evils exist in the creation of a Being of almighty power, of infinite wisdom, and of perfect goodness. I have endeavoured to lead the mind to the calm and serious consideration of principles which seem adequate to divest it of doubt, where doubt must be unhappiness, and to conduct it to a conclusion which, if once embraced from conviction, must secure it from misery.

I look back to the quiet and contemplative hours which were devoted to these inquiries with the feeling, not unmixed with melancholy, with which we reflect on our departed pleasures. And yet there is a closer connexion than there might at first seem, between these subjects and those which now much more exclusively occupy my attention. The real end of both is the same; for the object of each is alike to extend the knowledge, to mitigate the suffering, and to increase the happiness, of mankind; and without doubt this is the great business of life. Whoever succeeds in it most is the wisest, the ablest, and the happiest of his race; and even he whose measure of success is not great, cannot be without satisfaction, so long as he is conscious of the wish and the effort to accomplish more.

London, Trinity Square,
March, 1822.

PREFACE.

If it be reasonable to refer the formation of the earth, and of all the objects and beings on its surface, to an intelligent agent, and if we cannot doubt that we are entirely dependent upon our Creator for all which we possess and hope, it must be of unspeakable importance, to ascertain what his character really is; and if there be indeed reason to believe that, in fashioning our frame, and appointing that it should undergo at a certain period total disorganization, he do not by that change design to destroy us, but to qualify us for a higher state and for nobler pursuits, no inquiry can be so interesting as that which relates to our destiny in the ages which are before us.

Were it possible to arm ourselves against the calamities of life, as Perseus is fabled to have been armed by the gods, for his far-famed expedition, he who should commence the career of existence without his helmet, falchion and ægis, would be universally regarded as destitute of reason; but that individual is infinitely better prepared to encounter the evil with which he has to combat, who believes in the doctrine of a Providence, and knows the ground of his belief—that is, who views all events with the eye, and meets them with the feeling, of a Christian philosopher. With this belief, no combination of circumstances can make him, for any considerable period,

unhappy; without it, nothing can afford him a pleasure of which Wisdom ought not to fear to participate, and with which Philosophy ought not to blush to be content.

It was under the influence of this conviction, that the author of the following work commenced it with a trembling mind, afraid to undertake a task of so much magnitude and interest. But appearing to himself to have formed a clear, consistent, and cheering view of the nature and object of the dispensations of the great Parent of mankind, and having, in the retirement of private life, been a witness, on occasions which to him were deeply impressive, of the tendency of that view to heighten the pleasure of the hour of enjoyment, and to sustain the mind in the day of sorrow, he thought that, by directing the attention of his fellow-Christians to a comprehensive and connected investigation of the subject, he might possibly contribute something to the removal of their doubts and the confirmation of their faith. If, in any degree, he have succeeded in this object, his success will ever appear to him invaluable.

In one part of the work, an expression or two occur, which some persons may consider strong, and perhaps uncandid, relative to doctrines which appear to him unjust, malevolent, and immoral; but he trusts the spirit which this volume breathes will secure him from the suspicion of attributing anything of injustice, malevolence, or immorality, to the persons who maintain the opinions which he condemns. The intelligent inquirer will have made but little progress in his religious investigation, before he learns the necessity of distinguishing between rectitude of character and excellence of system—between the malignant tendency of a creed, and the benignity of the heart which embraces it. Neither justice nor charity can exist, unless this distinction be constantly kept up; and it is because it is so seldom made, that justice and charity are, among theologians, scarcely anything but a name.

The author would particularly solicit the attention of his readers, and especially of those who may be believers in the doctrine of Limited Punishment, terminated by Destruction, to that part of the work in which this subject is discussed. He has there endeavoured to meet, fairly and fully, all the arguments, as far as he has been able to learn them, which are urged in support of the hypothesis.—Feeling, as he does, a thorough persuasion, that each is satisfactorily answered, and that, on the other hand, difficulties are stated against the doctrine, which are insuperable, he cannot but think that the reasoning which appears to his own mind so forcible may possibly make some impression on that of the candid and patient inquirer. He is well aware, however, of the different estimate which different persons form of the force of the same arguments, and, instead of cherishing a positive, feeling that he is right, he is much more disposed to bear in mind the possibility of his being under those common influences by which we impose upon ourselves respecting the conclusiveness of our own reasonings, and to attend with thankfulness to any one who may do him the favour to correct any mistake into which he may have fallen.

To the friends who encouraged him to proceed with this work, by honouring him with their names as subscribers to it, as soon as they heard it was projected, the author returns his thanks; and the ardent testimony of approbation which he has received from some of them, since its publication, has excited the hope, that he has not written wholly in vain, and that these pages may perhaps be the means of speaking peace to the perturbed mind, and of solacing the sorrows of the mourner, when the hand which penned them is motionless, and the heart which dictated them shall have ceased to beat with human emotion.

THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

PART FIRST.

SECTION I.

Of the Proof of the Government of God.

In endeavoring to account for the existence of the world, we find it impossible to resist the conclusion, that it is the production of a Being of almighty power and of perfect goodness. It is evident that it did not create itself, for creation necessarily supposes a pre-existing intelligence. It is evident that the creatures on its surface did not give being to themselves, for they do not comprehend the mode of their own existence. They must therefore derive their origin from some Being who understood their nature, and who endowed them with the faculties they possess.

The simplest ideas we seem capable of forming of this Being are, that he is intelligent, and that he is uncaused. Intelligent he must be, for there are in his works proofs of exquisite and amazing skill; and, if there be any thing of which we may be certain, it is, that, wherever there is contrivance, there must be a Contriver, and that an adaption of means to an end cannot possibly exist without the operation of a Being who perceived and designed the end, and fitted the means to accomplish it.

That the Great First Cause of all things must be himself uncaused, is also a truth which we are obliged to admit; for, if we imagine that the immediate Creator of the world derives his existence and power from some superior being, we must suppose, either that this superior being is uncaused—in which case it is he who will answer to our conception of the Deity—or that he is dependent upon a third, and that this third is dependent on a fourth, and so on in an infinite series. But this infinite succession of dependent beings requires a first and independent cause, as much as any one in the series; and, however far we may choose to carry our thoughts backward, we must at length come to the conclusion, that there is some one independent, underived Being, the peculiarity of whose nature we endeavour to express by saying that he is self-existent. It is this Being that we term God, and that we suppose to be the Creator of the world.

If, in this visible creation, there be proofs of such contrivance as cannot but convince the mind that it is the production of infinite intelligence, it likewise contains indications of such power as we must acknowledge to be altogether without limits. He who could create such a world as this must be able to do whatever it is possible for wisdom and power to accomplish. We have therefore no difficulty in conceiving, that the Author of this part of the creation is the Author of the universe, however unlimited it be, or however amazing the degree of wisdom and power necessary to the production of it; for, though other worlds may be much greater in magnitude than this, and may contain much higher and nobler displays of wisdom, (which may possibly be the case, though we can scarcely conceive how even infinite wisdom can go beyond some contrivances with which we are acquainted,) yet there are in this globe sufficient appearances of it, to account for any which may exist in other parts of the creation, however glorious they may be.

The discoveries of modern science have exhibited in the most striking light these indications of wisdom in the economy of nature, and education, which is now generally diffused, has rendered them so familiar, that few are entirely ignorant of them. Amidst all these wonders, in nothing, perhaps, is the matchless skill of the Creator more admirably displayed, than in the simplicity of the means which he has adopted to accomplish his vast and mighty purposes. By one single principle he preserves the planets in their orbits, regulates and adjusts their various movements, determines the descent of bodies to the earth, and retains them at its surface. By a similar, if not the same principle, he causes the particles of matter of which bodies are composed to cohere, and, by the same power, exerted between particles of different kinds, all existing and all possible combinations of matter are formed. The same sun, which gives stability to the system of which it is the centre, furnishes it with light and heat. The same air, which sustains animal life in respiration, alike promotes the process of vegetation, supports combustion, equalizes temperature over the globe, dissolves, elevates, and diffuses water, deposits it again in the form of dew or rain, and thus enriches and beautifies the earth. Though by respiration, by the process of vegetation, and by many other chemical changes which take place without ceasing at the earth's surface, there is a constant consumption of one of the constituent principles of this air, and as constant a production of another, yet it is never deteriorated; because, by an arrangement which, if subsequent investigation shall establish its correctness, must be ranked amongst one of the most admirable adjustments in the whole economy of nature, that part of air which is no longer fitted for the

function of respiration, but which would prove deleterious to animals, is the very part which ministers to the nourishment of plants; and that part which plants exhale, animals inhale. Neither is the air in the least degree exhausted by the constant expenditure of it, either by the two tribes of animated beings, or by the innumerable processes which are constantly taking place, and to which it affords the materials; but, by the disengagement of its simple gases in other processes, and their reunion, the necessary supply, the just equilibrium, is kept up.

The same comprehensive wisdom is seen in the means which have been provided to secure the constant fertility of the earth, by the appointment of the law, that the destruction of one vegetable shall afford nourishment to another, and in like manner to keep up the supply of food for animals, by the appointment of the law, that they shall furnish subsistence to each other.

Were it necessary, in this argument, to descend to the consideration of the structure of individual bodies belonging to the animal or vegetable kingdom, it would be easy to point out, in both, instances of such consummate skill, as no mind could possibly contemplate without the highest admiration.

The proof of the goodness of the Creator is as complete as that of his wisdom, and even of his existence itself. We infer his existence from the appearance of design in his works, and his wisdom from the exquisiteness of that design; but every proof of design is equally a proof of benevolence, because the object of every contrivance is the production of good. We are not, therefore, more certain of the existence and wisdom of the Deity, than of his goodness; for the very facts on which we ground our belief of the former equally establish the latter.

If, then, the world be indeed the production of a Being who is infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness, the proof of his constant and perfect superintendence of it seems to be irresistible. For, since he is perfect in wisdom, he could not have created it without some design; and that design, whatever it be, he must be careful to accomplish. Whether we suppose he created it with a view to display to his intelligent creatures his wisdom and power, or with a design to impart enjoyment to an inconceivable number and variety of beings, we must believe, in the one case, that he will at all times provide against the interruption of that order which alone can illustrate his perfection, and the destruction of those faculties which are necessary to perceive them, and in the other, that he will suffer no event to happen, which can prevent or impair the happiness he determines to bestow. In every successive period, therefore, he must have exactly the same reason to superintend the events which take place in his creation, as he had at first to perform the glorious work.

Nothing is more evident, than that the inanimate and insensible part of the creation is fitted up for the accommodation, and designed to promote the happiness, of the sentient. The inanimate world is continually in motion, and every movement must influence, in a greater or less degree, the enjoyment of the animal creation. He, therefore, who constructed the wonderful fabric of the world, and so admirably adapted it to the enjoyment of the innumerable beings it contains, continually watches over the movements which take place within it, that they may not break in upon the order, nor impair the happiness he has established.

But the animal creation itself is likewise continually in motion. An animal possesses the power of originating motion, by which sometimes its existence, and always its happiness, in a greater or less degree, are affected. The care of the Deity must therefore extend to the movements of the animal, no less than those of the material world.

Such, then, being the constitution of things —it being evident that the material* is made for the animal creation—that the material world is continually changing, thereby producing a change in the animal—that the animal world itself is endowed with the property of changing its situation, and every change of *state* being necessarily attended with a change of *sensation*—the doctrine which an enlightened philosophy teaches, is, that the Deity, with a view of making that sensation just what he has seen fit to appoint, continually superintends the changes which induce it.

If every particle of matter in the globe be more or less in motion, and if we can fix our eye on no spot where there is not organized and conscious existence, the view which is here given of divine providence is large enough to take in the superintendence of the myriads of changes which, according to this supposition, must be taking place in every instant of time. If every star which shines in the firmament of heaven be a world crowded with inhabitants—if every fixed star be a sun, which illumines a system of worlds, as our sun illumines our system, and if these worlds and systems be filled with organized and happy creatures, (which is at once the most sublime and the most probable view it is possible to take of the creation,) this account of the divine administration is sufficient to comprehend the superintendence of all the events which must be taking place, in every instant of time, throughout this universe of being, to the extent of which we can set no limits, and in the contemplation of which all our faculties are lost.

Whoever believes that the system of the universe did not start into being without a designing cause, acknowledges that its Author is every where present. Omnipresence is an attribute which seems essential to the very notion of a God. It is true, we cannot understand how, at one and the same instant, he is present in every part of the universe; but this difficulty in conceiving of the mode of the

* By *material* creation is here always meant that part of the world which is supposed to be without sensation, whether organized or unorganized.

fact neither does nor ought to bring any doubt upon our belief of the fact itself, because our comprehension of every subject whatever is equally obscure and imperfect. We understand nothing of the mode of the existence of any being. We know that we ourselves exist, but we have no conception of the manner in which the wonderful phenomena of life are produced and continued. Of the existence of the Deity, it is impossible to doubt. We see his works—we feel his power; but in what manner he exists we do not know, because we have no data upon which to form even a conjecture respecting the mode of his existence. The reason that we do not know how he is every where present, is because we do not know how he is present any where; that is, because we do not at all comprehend the mode of his existence.

We see that man is bound to a spot of earth, and that his presence at one time is restricted to that spot. This being the only kind of existence with which our senses have made us acquainted, it is natural that we should find it difficult to conceive how a Being can at the same moment be here, and in the most distant part of the globe, and in the most distant planet. But, whatever be the mode of the existence of the Deity, we must necessarily conceive of it as different from our own. For at all events he has been present in this globe —in the planets which form our system, in the sun which is its centre, in every fixed star —in a word, wherever we behold a planet or a star. Whatever these bodies are, they are something; some of them are of immense magnitude, and are placed at such distances from each other, as to be beyond our power of calculation; and no one will contend that they placed themselves where they are. Now he who could place them there—he, the constitution of whose nature admits of his ever having been present at these inconceivable distances, must possess a nature so essentially different from ours, that we ought to have no difficulty in supposing that it may allow of his being present at them at one and the same time, as easily as at successive periods. As our mode of existence confines our presence to one spot at one time, his may be such as necessarily makes him present in every part of the universe.

Many writers on this subject appear needlessly to have magnified the difficulty which attends our conception of it. They seem in general to think that the Deity bears *no* relation whatever to space—that, in fact, he is actually present *no where*, and that of course it is only in a figurative sense that he is omnipresent. But surely it is more just to conceive of him as *really* pervading all space—as *actually* present in every part of the universe. This idea is at least distinct, and enables us to conceive, in a satisfactory manner, of his universal operation, while the view commonly entertained is extremely confused; for, do what we will, we can form no idea of a Being who bears no relation to space; and, if we could, we should still be pressed with the difficulty of conceiving how a Being can operate where he is not; but if we admit the hypothesis now proposed, we can readily believe that the Deity operates every where; for, according to it, he *is* every where.

In whatever manner, however, we may conceive of the omnipresence of the Deity, we must all admit the fact itself, that by the necessity of his nature he is every where, and that by the necessity he knows every thing. And no other admission is requisite, to establish, in the most satisfactory manner, his universal and perfect government. His benevolent eye is upon me—his almighty arm is beneath me; with the situation in which I am placed, he is infinitely better acquainted in all its parts, than I am with any single circumstance in it. He knows that a certain event is about to befal me; he understands its nature; he foresees its consequences; he is perfectly wise; he is infinitely good. Would he then permit it to happen, did he not foresee it would answer some wise and benevolent purpose? Can we conceive that he is every where present without acting? that he knows every thing. without availing himself of the power he possesses, to prevent what is wrong, and to accomplish what is right? that, though he is perfectly acquainted with every evil which is about to arise, and perfectly able to prevent it, he will not stretch out his hand to do so? that the original source of all activity is the only inactive Being in the universe, and the source of all energy the only Being who does not exert his power?

If this opinion be absurd in itself, and unsupported by the shadow of reason, there is but one other conclusion which can be adopted, namely, that every event, which happens to every creature, takes place according to the appointment of the Deity. Nothing can be more frivolous than the objection, that the watchfulness which this supposes over the most trifling concerns of the most insignificant creature is unworthy of the Sovereign of the universe. Whatever it was not beneath him to create, it cannot be beneath him to provide for and to protect; and whatever is of any importance, either to the present or the future comfort of any being, is worthy of care in the degree in which it may be the means of enjoyment or the cause of suffering. Its *minuteness* cannot render it unworthy of notice, if it be of any consequence; and what would detract from the dignity and greatness of the Governor of the universe would be, not his taking care of the minute concerns, but his neglecting them.

A great part of animal enjoyment depends upon what we are accustomed to consider as little things. A great number of little things particularly if they often recur, become of greater importance than any single event, however vast or momentous; they produce, taken together, a large sum of enjoyment, and there seems no possible way of taking care of this collective sum, but by taking care of particular events. And, indeed, the superintendence of minute events implies as

much dignity as the superintendence of great events; and our admiration is never more excited, than when we contemplate an intelligence, which, while it directs the most grand and mighty movements, overlooks not the most insignificant concern capable of affecting the ultimate result. That superintendence which extends its care to the least obvious circumstances, no less than to the most striking, is certainly more perfect than that which regards only such events as no intelligent being could possibly overlook.

The apprehension, that this constant superintendence of events, from the minutest circumstance which is capable of exciting sensation, up to those mighty movements which affect the condition of worlds, must be attended with perplexity to the Deity, originates in conceptions equally unenlightened and imperfect. He is at all times present every where, and every where is capable of exerting his power. The superintendence of *all* the events in the universe, therefore, can be attended with no more trouble to him than the superintendence of any *single* event. The whole of possibility must all times be equally easy to the Being who possesses infinite power.

We have, therefore, abundant reason to rest in the delightful assurance, that, of every event which takes place, all the care is taken which perfect wisdom can dictate, and infinite goodness require—that all its consequences are foreseen and considered—that its time, its place, its measure, its duration, are all appointed by him who first set in motion the complicated and mighty wheels which bring it round.

Of this sublime truth, which nothing but its great and cheering consequences can lead us to doubt, we may be further assured, by the consideration of the relation which the Creator necessarily bears to his creatures. He is not merely their Creator; by the very act of creation he unites himself to them by a tie, but feebly represented by that which binds a parent to his child. He is their Father, in a much more near and real sense than any human parent is the father of his offspring; and the best feelings of earthly parents must be exceeded by his, in the degree in which he is more perfect than they. Yet a good father lives but to labour for the welfare of his family. A tender mother, while she presses her child to her bosom, anxiously considers how she may best avail herself of the situation in which she is placed, to advance its happiness—wishes she had the command of circumstances, and could prevent the occurrence of every event capable of endangering its virtue and enjoyment.

This power, so vainly desired by human parents, is possessed by the Universal Parent. And is it possible to believe that he will not exert it for the welfare of his offspring? With unerring wisdom and unbounded goodness, must he not *feel* towards them in the *best* manner? And, since no power in the universe is capable of controlling his will, must he not at all times *act* towards them as these feelings dictate?

No other consideration surely can be necessary, to make every intelligent being satisfied with his lot, and resigned to the dispensations which befal him. Many of the events of life, it is true, are deeply afflictive. Often our enjoyments seem given us but to be removed, and even the most secure we hold by an uncertain tenure. The inequalities in health, in the duration of life, in the distribution of property—the prevalence of natural and moral evil in their thousand shapes sometimes press with such severity upon the mind, as to create, even in the most pious and confiding, a doubt whether a Being of perfect benevolence be indeed seated at the helm of affairs. Our very hearts die within us when sickness and death assail our beloved friends.

When the heart on which our image was engraven, and, which beats with generous affection for us, is insensible and cold—when, in that dark and narrow bed, from which they cannot arise, sleep a father, a wife, a child, a friend, we feel a sorrow which refuses to be comforted. We dwell upon their excellences with a mournful pleasure. We think of the happy hours we have spent in their society—hours never to return—with a feeling which nearly approaches to despair. *That they are no more*—that they have ceased to think, to feel, to act, at least for us—that the eye which used to gladden at our approach is dark, and can no more beam upon us with tenderness and love—that those lips which have enlightened us with the counsels of wisdom, or soothed our souls with the accents of hallowed and virtuous affection, are silent for ever—no more to solace us in sorrow, no more to excite or to heighten our pleasure—while these thoughts press upon the mind, (and on the loss of our dear and virtuous friends they do incessantly press upon it, sinking it to the dust,) the universe is a blank to us. No longer do we discover any traces of that supreme and unchanging goodness which we have been accustomed to contemplate with delight. But even in these moments of sadness we must be unjust to ourselves, and to the Author of our mercies, if we are not soon revived by the consciousness of benevolence, to which the severity of anguish may for a while have made us insensible. The privation of our friends, afflictive as it is, is never without benefit to us. It is then we feel that we are born for immortality—that the world is not our home—that we are travelling to a fairer clime. It is then that we enter into religion, and feel its genuine spirit. The same happy effects are often produced by sickness; and, to the natural and moral disorders which prevail, we owe the production and the growth of the highest excellences of our nature. In a word, an attentive consideration of what are termed the evils of life, enables us to discover so much of the truest benevolence in many of them, as may well induce us to bear with resignation those whose design we cannot so fully comprehend, until it shall please our heavenly Father to give us clearer light and stronger vision.

It is true that the evil we suffer, and, indeed,

that the general train of events, is the result of laws which we cannot without absurdity suppose the Deity to be continually changing and suspending, for the benefit of individuals. Neither does any rational believer in a Providence maintain such an opinion. It is not necessary to his argument, to suppose that these general laws have ever *once* been suspended. From a conviction, that he has evidence of the fact, he may believe that on some occasions of supreme importance they have been suspended; but the great argument for the doctrine of a Providence would remain just the same, even though it could be demonstrated, that the laws by which the universe is governed have operated with undeviating regularity from the beginning. For whoever believes that these general laws were appointed by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, must admit that he foresaw all the consequences which would result from their operation in every instant of time, and to every individual. If, therefore, when he appointed them, he foresaw that they would give rise to any event inconsistent with perfect benevolence, he would have so modified them, as effectually to have prevented its occurrence, or he would have provided for its counteraction, by the operation of secondary causes. Whether the Deity govern the universe by such an original adjustment as secures, with undeviating order, the occurrence of every thing in its proper season, place, and manner, according to the plan which his wisdom and goodness have ordained, or whether he govern it by a continual superintendence of events, every thing, on either supposition, is entirely in his hands. It is possible that the first is his plan; he may have adopted the second; both must be alike easy to him. But, since both were equally in his power, he can have been induced to choose the one rather than the other, only because the one is better adapted than the other to accomplish the purposes of benevolence; and it seems scarcely possible for us not to conclude, that these purposes may be better effected by the second than by the first, and therefore that this is the plan which he has adopted.

To sum up the whole argument, if of every event all the care is not taken which it is right should be taken, the administration of the world is imperfect; but the wisdom, power, and goodness, which are spent on the minutest and meanest object we can contemplate, necessarily lead to the conclusion, that their Author possesses these attributes in a perfect measure; and, since they have been exerted in the production of particular objects, they must be employed in the government of the whole. We have therefore the most solid ground to adopt the sublime and cheering conclusion, that nothing can happen without the knowledge and permission of unerring wisdom and perfect goodness, and that all the vast affairs of the universe, in every particular circumstance, and in every instant of time, are under the wisest and the best direction.

The preceding arguments are founded on the perfections which the Deity is universally acknowledged to possess, and their truth must be admitted by every consistent theist. But if God have given to his intelligent offspring a revelation of his will—if he have altered the course of nature, in attestation of its truth—if, to prove the divinity of the mission of the great personage whom he raised up to communicate it, he endowed him with the power of performing such stupendous works as no being, unassisted by him, could possibly accomplish—if mankind were in want of a revelation—if the revelation actually given be in every respect suited to supply it—if it be calculated to rectify their errors, to purify their hearts, to exalt their hopes, to dignify their pursuits, to promote their truest welfare here, and to prepare them for pure and ever-increasing happiness hereafter—if all the circumstances of time, place, and method, were admirably adapted to give it effect, and to secure the most important objects it is designed to accomplish, then is the doctrine of providence established on a new basis. Every Christian *must* believe that the affairs of mankind are under the direction of the Deity—that he has not cut himself off from all interference with the wants and happiness of his creatures—that he does interpose for their welfare as he sees occasion; for the Christian system is one of the most illustrious and delightful instances of that interposition.

If, from the fact itself of a divine revelation, we descend to the particular doctrines which it contains, we shall find the most decisive evidence of this truth. It is recognised in every page—it is affirmed on innumerable occasions, and in every variety of form. God is there represented as the Sovereign Arbiter of events—as the Great Being who sitteth on the circle of the earth, judging among the nations. It is he who causeth the sun to shine, and the rain to descend; it is he who giveth healthful and fruitful seasons; it is he who rideth on the wings of the wind, and it is his voice which thunders in the storm. By him kings reign and princes decree justice. He exalteth one and abaseth another. He turneth round the mighty wheel of events, retaining every individual in the situation which he judges fit. 'He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth; he hath determined their appointed times, and the place of their habitation.'

Our reverend Master assures us, that not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without the will of our heavenly Father, and that the very hairs of our head are all numbered; meaning, it is evident, that our most trifling concerns are appointed by him. 'Behold,' says he, 'the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why are ye anxious about raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which flourisheth to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the furnace, will he not much more

clothe you? Take not, therefore, anxious thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

The argument which our Lord here employs is beautiful and affecting. Every one must have felt its force. When, in a solitary ramble, our eye has been struck with a little flower blooming in a secluded spot—when we have examined the perfection of all its parts—the richness, the variety, the exquisite beauty of its tints—when we have considered the care which has been taken of this humble plant, and the inimitable skill employed in the construction of it, which of us has not been deeply impressed with the truth which our divine Instructor, here teaches us? Which of us has not said to himself, Can so much skill have been lavished in forming, can so much care have been taken in preserving, this little flower, and can I, humble and insignificant though I am, be overlooked by the Author of my being? It is impossible. There must be a God; there must be a Providence; and I, and the myriads of creatures who, in common with me, enjoy the boon of existence, have reason to rejoice.

SECTION II.

Of the Manner in which the Divine Government is Administered.

When the deity is represented as appointing and controlling every event, it may seem difficult to conceive how this can be reconciled with the agency and accountability of man. A little consideration, however will show that these truths are not incompatible with each other.

Though the Sovereign Arbiter of events regulates and determines every thing, yet he carries on the administration of the world by the *instrumentality* of other beings. Seldom does he act *directly*; seldom is he the *immediate* cause of any thing. He has left the developement of his vast plan to the operation of what are termed secondary causes; but these can act only so far, and in such a manner, as he has appointed.

The material world is governed by certain general laws, which are never interrupted except on occasions of supreme importance, foreseen and provided for from the beginning. These laws, though thus steady and invariable in their operation, bring about, in every instant of time, precisely that condition only of the material world which he appoints, and which is necessary to carry on his purposes with regard to his animal and moral creation.

The animal and moral world he governs by laws equally fixed and invariable; but, being of a nature different from that of the material world, they require to be governed by different laws. By different laws, therefore, they are governed; by laws admirably and exactly suited to its nature, each is guided to its destined end.

The material world, being without sensation and thought, is governed by a particular set of laws. The animal world, possessing sensation and thought, is governed by another set. By sensation and thought, an animal is induced to act. Every animal possesses a fixed and determinate constitution, according to which, sensation and thought are excited in it in a particular, determinate manner. The great agent in inducing sensation and thought in the animal, is the material world. A certain state of the material world will inevitably produce a certain sensation in an animal possessing a particular constitution; that sensation will produce a particular volition, and that volition will lead, *certainly*, to a particular action. It only requires, therefore, an exact knowledge of the constitution of the animal world to render its state at all times precisely what may be required; for he who perfectly understands the constitution of the material and the animal worlds, and has a sovereign control over both, has only to adapt the state of the one to that of the other, to make both, at any and at all periods, exactly what he wishes. While every animal goes on regularly to exercise its different functions, he may at all times maintain the whole animal world in the condition he pleases; for he may so modify the operation of the material world upon it, as inevitably to bring it into the state he wishes. Thus a sovereign control may be exercised over the material and animal worlds, while both invariably act according to the settled principles of their nature.

As we ascend in the scale of creation, we shall find that the principle of the divine administration is exactly the same. Man is endowed not only with the faculties of sensation and thought, but with the power of distinguishing between the rectitude and immorality of conduct. He is capable of understanding his obligations, and the grounds of them. Certain actions appear to him to be good; others he regards as evil. The performance of the one is attended with a consciousness that he has acted right, and excites the sensation of happiness; the performance of the other is attended with an inward conviction that he has acted wrong, and produces misery.

All this takes place in a fixed and invariable manner, according to certain laws, which are termed principles of his nature, and the faculty on which this discrimination and feeling depends, is termed his *moral* nature.

Now it is obvious, that, to a certain extent, a being thus endowed may be governed exactly in the same manner as a creature who possesses only an animal nature. In him, as well as in the mere animal, sensations will be excited by the external circumstances in which he is placed. In him, too, a particular sensation will excite a particular volition; but the exercise of this volition will be attended with a result which is never found in the ani-

mal—with a consciousness that he has acted well or ill—with a feeling of approbation or of disapprobation—with a sensation of happiness or misery, arising purely from the action itself. This train of sensation becomes itself a new source of action; but it arises according to certain fixed laws, and operates as steadily as any other principle of his nature, or as any law of the material world. He, therefore, who perfectly understands *this* nature, who knows how every circumstance will affect this *moral* agent, and who has a sovereign control over events, can govern him with the same steadiness with which he regulates the animal or the material world—can make him at all times feel, and think, and act, as may be necessary to carry on the great designs of his administration, without violating any principle of his nature. By adapting the particular situation in which he is placed to the particular state of his mind, he can excite whatever volition, and secure whatever action, he pleases. What is maintained, then, is, that, with respect to every individual in the world, there is this exact adaptation of circumstances to his temper, his habits, his wants; so that, while he is left to the full and free exercise of every faculty he possesses, he can feel and act only as the Sovereign of the Universe appoints; because the circumstances which excite his sensations and volitions are determined by him. It is not just to suppose that the Deity exercises any such control over his creatures, as to force them to act contrary to their will, or to violate any principle of their nature. They always act, and must act, according to their will, and in conformity to their nature; but at the same time he secures his own purpose, by placing them in circumstances which so operate upon their nature, as certainly to induce the conduct he requires.*

Volition cannot arise, as is often imagined, at the pleasure of the mind. The term volition expresses that state of the mind which is immediately previous to the actions which are called voluntary; but that state is not induced by the mind itself, but by objects operating upon it. The circumstances in which a percipient being is placed excite sensations, and sensations ideas. Sensations and ideas induce that peculiar condition of the mind which is termed pleasurable, or its opposite, which is termed painful. The feeling of pleasure excites desire; that of pain, aversion. Will is the result of this state of the mind. Prove to the mind, that an object is desirable—that is, that it will induce pleasure—and you immediately excite in it the volition to possess it. Prove to it, that an object will occasion pain, and you excite the volition to avoid it. Volition, then, it is manifest, depends on the object, whatever it be, which the mind contemplates as desirable or otherwise. Take away the object, there is no volition; satisfy it that the object can affect it neither with pleasure nor pain, there is no volition; so that volition does not spring up in the mind of its own accord, and without cause, but is entirely dependent upon objects perceived to be, or supposed to be, desirable. In a word, and to repeat what has already been said, sensations and ideas are attended with the feelings of pleasure or of pain; these induce desire or aversion, and these volition, with as much certainty and steadiness as the law of gravitation produces the phenomena which are dependent upon it.*

Volition being thus dependent on the circumstances in which an individual is placed, any given volition may be excited in him by a certain modification of his circumstances. We find that the tempers of different men are infinitely various. The Deity has made a corresponding variety in the situations in which he has placed them. To every individual he has assigned his allotted work; to every intelligent and moral agent he has given a certain part of his administration to carry

* It has been argued, by almost all who have hitherto written on the origin of evil, that its existence could not have been prevented, unless an absolute restraint had been placed upon the will. This is not true; for there might have been given to mankind a knowledge of their welfare so clear and strong, as effectually to have secured their choice of it. In other words, they might have been brought under the influence of motives so powerfully determining them to the choice of good, that it would not have been possible for them, their circumstances remaining the same, to have chosen evil. This has been distinctly admitted by a late writer, who, though he has laboured to reconcile, and sometimes very successfully, the evil which actually exists, with the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, yet has carefully avoided opposing or even alluding to those theological opinions which involve this subject in great and insurmountable difficulty. 'It is a position wholly untenable, that, according to our view of the subject, the degree of moral evil must necessarily have been as great as it is, unless an absolute restraint had been laid upon the will of man. Without entering into metaphysical discussions, it may be safely assumed, that the will is determined by the greater apparent good, and that when it makes a bad election, in defiance of reason and judgment, the dismission of some present uneasiness, or the possession of some present gratification, is the greatest apparent good for the time being. Had, then, their real interest, upon a full view of their present and future condition, been placed before all mankind, with a clear distinctness which we can certainly conceive, because we have examples of it on record, freewill, though exposed to less chance of error, would not have been annihilated; and yet it would have been as morally impossible for man to choose evil in opposition to good, as we imagine it to be for the glorified inheritors of a future state, as it proved to be for Jesus Christ, during his adoption of human nature, with its temptations and infirmities, or, to go no farther, as it appears to be for good men, when they approach the termination of their course, after a long perseverance in the habits and practice of virtue.' *Treatise on the Records of the Creation.* By John Bird Sumner, M. A., vol. ii. p. 228.

* This is merely an attempt to explain the manner in which volition arises. There can be no doubt that the will is invariably *determined* by the greater apparent good—or, to state the fact more generally, the will is invariably determined by motive, and with a steadiness and strength always in proportion to the uniformity and vigour of the motive.

on, and, in order to qualify him for it, he has adjusted to the particular constitution of his nature every circumstance of his being, from the first instant of his existence, to that which terminates his earthly career. If what is termed his natural disposition be such as would seem to render him incapable of performing it, the situation in which he is placed is adapted to it, and is such as to excite, to repress, or to modify it, till it becomes exactly what is necessary to fit him for his work; so that every individual is strictly an instrument, raised up and qualified by God, to carry on the wise and benevolent purposes of his government.

Suppose it is his will to lead men to the discovery of the most interesting truths, respecting the phenomena of nature, and the laws by which the universe is governed; he endows an individual with a clear and capacious mind; he places him in circumstances favorable to the developement of his intellectual faculties; he leads him to observe, to reflect, to investigate; he forms him to those habits of patient and profound inquiry, which are necessary to elicit the truths to be disclosed, and sufficient to secure him from every temptation to carelessness and dissipation; he raises up a NEWTON. Suppose, after having for wise, though perhaps inscrutable reasons, permitted the most low and degrading notions to prevail, respecting his own character, government, and worship, he determines to lead back the minds of men to purer and nobler sentiments, and to overthrow those corrupt systems of religion which have prevailed for ages, and in the support of which the passions and the interests of men are now engaged: he raises up an individual, whose mind he enlightens, whose soul he fills with an ardent zeal for the purity of religion and the simplicity of its rites, whose spirit danger does but excite, and suffering cannot subdue—who, though cities and empires arm against him, and one general cry of execration and menace follow him from land to land, goes on with undaunted courage to expose abuses, and to call in a louder and louder voice for reformation: it is the voice of LUTHER, which makes Corruption rage and Superstition tremble. Suppose it is his will to save a people in love with liberty, and worthy because capable of enjoying it, from oppression, and to exhibit to the world an example of what the weak who are virtuous and united may effect against the strong who are corrupt and tyrannical: in the very season when he is needed he forms, and in the very station where his presence is necessary he places, a WASHINGTON. And suppose it is his will to pour the balm of consolation into the wounded heart, to visit the captive with solace, to extend mercy to the poor prisoner, to admit into his noisome cell the cheering beams of his sun, and his refreshing breezes: he breathes the genuine spirit of philanthropy into some chosen bosom; he superadds an energy which neither the frown of power, nor the menace of interest, nor the scorn of indifference, can abate—which exhibits so strongly to the view of men the horrors of the dungeon, as to force them to suspend for a while their business and their pleasures, to feel for the sufferings of others, and to learn the great lessons, that the guilty are still their brethren—that it is better to reclaim than to destroy—that the punishment which is excessive is immoral—that that which does not aim to reform is unjust, and that which does not actually do so, unwise: he gives to a suffering world the angel-spirit of a HOWARD.

The bodily frame and the natural temper of an individual may seem, as has already been observed, ill-adapted to execute the work which the Deity has determined to perform by him; yet no *force* is employed to induce him to do it. He is not *compelled* to act against his volition, but the circumstances in which he is placed are so adapted to his corporeal, his mental, and his moral constitution, as to excite the requisite volition. Suppose his bodily frame is weak, his temper irritable, his mind bold, impetuous, and rash; the part assigned him in the great drama of life requires uncommon bodily exertion. He must face the storm; he must endure the extremes of heat and cold; often he must lie unpillowed and unsheltered—his fatigue excessive—the supply even of the common necessaries of existence scanty and irregular. How can all this be without his perishing? He is led to adopt that regimen and exercise, together, perhaps, with that course of medicine, which strengthen his debilitated frame; gradually he is inured to fatigue and toil, and gradually he becomes capable of sustaining an astonishing degree of both. In order to ensure his success, the utmost patience, gentleness, caution, and foresight, are necessary. But his temper is irritable, and his mind bold, impetuous, and rash. Experience teaches him the folly of indulging this morbid sensibility; it occasions him bitter mortification; his impetuosity hurries him into errors which bring with them a long train of calamities; his boldness disappoints his cherished hopes; his rashness snatches from him some favourite object, at the very moment when success is placing it in his hand. The school of life teaches him to act better the part of life; present failure prepares him for future success; he learns, that, if he would escape perpetual vexation and lasting misery, he must check the first risings of passion, reflect before he acts, and act with caution.

Suppose the disposition of another is so mild as almost to degenerate into weakness; his caution is in danger of inducing irresolution, and he is in the habit of considering and re-considering every circumstance so minutely and so often, that he nearly loses the season of action. He is wealthy, attached to wealth, and full of the timidity which is so often the companion of riches. Yet this is the man who is to take a leading part in some great event, which requires promptitude, decision, uncommon effort, unconquerable perseverance, the certain sacrifice of a great portion of wealth —perhaps the loss of all. He is not *forced*

along an unwilling agent; he is not surprised out of the caution of his character; he does not give up his wealth with reluctance and murmuring. He is led to view the event in which he is destined to take so great a share as so important, that even *he* ceases to doubt of the propriety and necessity of endeavouring to effect it, and as so valuable, that he deems it worth the sacrifice he is called upon to make. The path marked out for him is so vividly displayed before his eyes, that he can not but see it. He thinks it is the path of duty; he knows it is that of honour; he believes it will be that of happiness. His agency in this event, therefore, is now so far from being against his volition, that restraint would be placed upon that volition, were he not the agent in it that he is. This, then, is the way in which the Deity influences his creatures. In order to secure his purposes, he does not cause them to act against their volition, but he so impresses their understandings and their hearts, as to make them feel that their happiness depends on the performance of the work he assigns them.

Nor is it any objection to this view of the manner in which the divine administration is carried on, that it implies a constant influence of the Deity over the human mind. There is no reasonable being who does not exercise some influence of this kind over the minds of others. What a powerful influence does the parent exert over the child, the master over the servant, brother over brother, and friend over friend! How can I measure the degree, how can I estimate the value of the influence which that revered instructor exercised over my mind, who first imbued it with the principles of wisdom and rectitude! What do I not owe to that dear companion of my youth, on whose early intercourse with me, memory still delights to dwell—who was my superior, in age, in attainment, in wisdom, in virtue—who taught me so much while seeming to learn, and governed me so entirely without meaning to control! How many of the sensations which cheer my heart at this hour are the result of an influence which commenced at that distant period! How much of my present character is wholly dependent on that influence! It was he who corrected that disposition, the seed of which had long lain dormant in my heart, which then was springing up rapidly, and which, had it been suffered to fix its root deeply there, would have made me a totally different being. It was he who first led me into that train of thought which directed the future pursuits of my mind, placed me in the station of life I occupy, formed the connexions which bind me by the strongest and the sweetest ties to my fellow-beings, made me what I am, and determined what I am to be. It was my friend who influenced me. It was a higher Being, a wiser and better Friend, the unerring and unchanging Friend of both, who influenced him.

May not these considerations suffice to give us a clear and just conception of the kind of influence which the Deity exercises over us, and by which he works his purposes in us and by us? It differs from that of our wisest and best friend, only in being as much wiser and better, as wisdom and goodness in absolute perfection are different from the faint and transient indications of these attributes which are found in mortals.

The only objection of importance, which can be urged against this view of the divine government, is, that it seems to lessen accountability, and to destroy the distinction between virtue and vice. Let us not be deceived by the sound of words. When we say that man is accountable, what do we mean? We can only mean that he will be punished for doing what he knows is wrong, and rewarded for performing what he is conscious is right. It is that rectitude of will which leads him to discharge his duty, which constitutes him virtuous; it is that perversion of mind which induces him to violate it, which renders him vicious. When his volition is good, and he obeys it, we say that he is an object of approbation, and worthy of reward; when his volition is evil, and he yields to it, we say that he is an object of disapprobation. and worthy of punishment. It is the nature of his volition which determines our notion respecting his worth or his demerit. We neither do nor ought to regard the *cause* of his volition. It is the evil of his will of which we disapprove, and to which it is necessary to apply the discipline of correction.

You demand why, since my volition is independent of myself, and excited by circumstances over which I have no control, am I accountable for its nature, or liable to punishment if it be evil. The reply is obvious. This objection is founded on the implied presumption, that volition is induced at the pleasure of the mind, and that it is the exertion of this power, in exciting an evil volition, which constitutes guilt. For, when it is asked, why am I to be punished for my volition, since it is independent of myself, the inquirer must pre-suppose that he is to be punished for his volition, *because* it is dependent upon himself, which is assuming as true the very point in dispute, and raising an objection on that assumption. If, however, there be any truth in the account which has been given of the origin of volition, that assumption is totally fallacious.

I am not to be punished for my volition, you say, because it is independent of myself, and excited by circumstances over which I have no control. I reply, if your volition be evil, and you obey it, it is that very circumstance which renders you worthy of punishment, and that the dependence or independence of the volition on yourself does not at all affect the question. Your volition is evil; you deserve punishment. Why? *In order that that evil volition may be corrected.* Punishment is not retrospective, but prospective. You are to be punished, not because you have yielded to an evil volition, but in order that you may yield to an evil volition no more. To inflict pain for the past, any further than the past has reference to the future, is revenge, not punishment. Were it perfectly certain,

that an evil volition which is past would be attended with no ill consequences in time to come, it would be neither necessary nor just to visit it with suffering; but, because an evil volition is evil—that is, because it tends to produce unhappiness—it is to be punished, in order that the misery it threatens may be prevented. It is the incorrect conception which is formed of the nature and object of punishment, therefore, which lies at the foundation of this objection, and which makes the subject appear so difficult to many persons; and I cannot but think that all doubt and difficulty respecting it will be removed from the mind of every one who will consider with attention what is said on this subject in the third chapter (part ii.) of this work.

The train of circumstances in which an individual has been placed has given rise to a disposition, the indulgence of which is incompatible with his own happiness, and with that of his fellow-beings. This disposition it is necessary to correct. This correction is accomplished by causing him to pass through another train of circumstances, which makes him feel the evil of his conduct; and this discipline, being attended with suffering, is expressed by the term punishment.

Such, then, being the foundation of praise and blame, of reward and punishment, it is obvious that a person is an object of moral approbation, and is worthy of reward when his volition is good, and when he obeys that volition—that he is an object of moral disapprobation, and is worthy of punishment when his volition is evil, and when, notwithstanding the voice which speaks within him, and which warns him of its nature, he yields to its impulse. The gold which incites the midnight plunderer to rob is not blamable, though it is the immediate cause of the volition which induces the evil deed. It is the volition itself which is evil, and which requires to be rectified, and punishment is the process, the moral discipline, by which its correction is effected.

Thus, then, we seem to have a clear and just conception of the manner in which the whole train of circumstances, which forms the character and induces the conduct of moral agents, may be entirely the appointment of the Deity, while the agents themselves are at the same time the subjects of praise and blame, of reward and punishment.

Were there no evil in the world, there could be no possible objection to this view of the subject.* Were every one virtuous and happy, every heart would rejoice to trace to the Deity its excellences and its pleasures. But how can he who is perfect in benignity be the author of evil? It is this which perplexes the mind; and the answer to the question involves the great inquiry, about which intelligent and pious persons have in all ages exercised their most anxious thoughts, and leads directly to the consideration of the *design* of the Deity in the administration of the world. Into the consideration of this subject, we shall enter in the next section; but, before proceeding to it, it may be proper to notice an objection of minor importance, which is sometimes urged against the doctrine of providence, and which has been stated and answered in so excellent a manner by Dr. Price, in his admirable Disquisition on Providence, (p. 47,) that it seems a kind of injustice to the subject, to employ any language but his own:—

"It has been often objected, that it is impairing the beauty of the world, and representing it as a production more imperfect than any work of human art, to maintain that it cannot subsist of itself, or that it requires the hand of its Maker to be always at it, to continue its motions and order.

"The full answer to this objection is, that, to every machine or perpetual movement, for answering any particular purpose, there always belong some *first mover*, some *weight* or *spring*, or other power, which is continually acting upon it, and from which all its motions are derived; nor, without such power, is it possible to conceive of any such machine. The machine of the universe, then, like all besides analogous to it, of which we have any idea, must have a *first mover*. Now it has been demonstrated, that this first mover cannot be matter itself. It follows, therefore, that this first objection is so far from being of any force, that it leads to the very conclusion which it is brought to overthrow.

"The excellence of a machine by no means depends on its going properly of *itself*—for this is impossible—but on the skill with which its various parts are adjusted to one another, and all its different effects are derived from the constant action of some power. What would indeed make a machine appear imperfect and deformed, is assigning a separate power to every distinct part, without allowing any place for mechanism; and, in like manner, what would really make the frame of nature appear imperfect and deformed, is resolving phenomena too soon to the divine agency, or supposing it the *immediate* cause of every particular effect. But I have not been pleading for this, but only, that, however far mechanism may be carried, and the chain of causes extend in the material universe, to the divine power exerted continually in all places, every law, and every effect and motion in it, must be *at last* resolved. This is a conclusion which the modern improvements in natural philosophy have abundantly confirmed, and which some of the first and best philosophers have received; nor can that philosophy be otherwise than little and contemptible, which hides the Deity from our views, which excludes him from the world, or does not terminate in the acknowledgment and adoration of him, as the Maker, Preserver, and Ruler of all things."

* Neither would there be the same objection to it in the minds of many persons, did it not only attribute to the Deity the production of natural evil. But the misery occasioned by an *earthquake*, or by *disease*, is often as great as that produced by the bad passions of mankind; and it is altogether as difficult to account for the existence of natural as of moral evil. Indeed, the same account must be given of both.

SECTION III.

Of the Design of the Divine Government.

Since, then, there is a perfect superintendence of all events, they must be directed to some end. The Deity must have some wise and benevolent object to accomplish, as the result of his administration, and that object can be nothing but the final and perfect happiness of his intelligent creatures.

With this view every thing must be planned, and to this end both the natural and the moral disorders which prevail must necessarily conduce. No one can believe that the Deity has chosen evil for its own sake. Were this the case, he would not be good. Were he to cause the least degree of suffering, merely for the sake of producing pain, it would be utterly incompatible with benevolence. Evil in his hands, therefore, can only be the instrument of good. Nothing can have induced him to permit its existence, but the perception, that under his administration it will terminate in the production of greater good than could have been enjoyed without it. When he created the world, and first set in motion that train of events which has induced the actual state of things, he foresaw that the partial evil which would arise would terminate in the production of a larger sum of happiness than could have been occasioned by its prevention. This being the case, it is the prevention, not the permission, of this evil, which would have militated against the perfection of his benevolence. That infinite wisdom and almighty power *may* secure this result from the partial prevalence of evil, is at least possible, and it is probable, because the supposition is perfectly reasonable in itself, and accounts for and reconciles every appearance.

It has been distinctly admitted, that these reasonings are conclusive, and that the doctrine founded upon them must be allowed to be established, if the principle be granted, that evil, under the superintendence of infinite wisdom and benignity, is the means of producing ultimate good. It is impossible to desire any other concession than this.

That no formal proof of this principle was attempted in the preceding editions of this work, arose from the author's impression, that, in assuming it as true, he only took for granted, that which all Christians not only believe, but glory in believing. That a theist—that a Christian, writing in the nineteenth century, in a country in which the doctrines of theology are so freely discussed, and the scriptures so generally read, should not only expressly deny the beneficial tendency of evil in the divine administration, but positively affirm that it is essentially and ultimately evil, and even that there is no proposition more indispensable to the existence of true religion, as a habit of the mind, could scarcely have been expected. However, the position, that evil is not itself an end, but the means to some further end, and that that end is good, is not, it must be confessed, self-evident, and therefore it may be proper to state the proof of it. The believer in the doctrine of final restoration can have no other wish, than that it should be considered as just or fallacious, as this position is established or refuted. Without doubt, this is the point on which the controversy chiefly depends. The following considerations, which may, perhaps tend to determine this previous question, are submitted to the calm and serious attention of the reader.

In the first place, the constitution of the physical and moral world is utterly inconsistent with benevolence, unless evil under the divine administration be the means of producing ultimate good. If good be the issue of the temporary prevalence of evil, there is no appearance in nature, and no event, and no series of events, in human life, which may not be consistent with perfect benevolence. If evil be essentially and ultimately evil, the Author and Governor of the world is malevolent.

The constitution of the physical world all admit is such as its Creator appointed; to the Creator, therefore, every one is obliged to refer all those appearances in it which are designated evil. The constitution of the moral world is equally the appointment of the same wise and good Being; for he gave to every man the nature he possesses; he placed every man in the station he occupies; immediately or mediately he is the cause of all the impressions which, from the cradle to the grave, have been made on every human being.

But men's characters are formed entirely, and can be formed only by the impressions which have been made on that nature which they have received from the hands of the Creator. If, then, God be the former of man's nature, and the Author of all the impressions which have induced his dispositions, and volitions, and actions, and if moral evil arise in this constitution, that moral evil must be referred to God's appointment. This is the clear deduction of reason; it is confirmed by the express declarations of scripture.*

It is common, among a certain class of theologians, to make a distinction between God's appointment and his permission. They allow that he permitted, but deny that he appointed, moral evil. Let us examine to what this distinction amounts. God, it is said, permitted moral evil. It will be granted that he must also have foreseen it—that he must have foreseen it as the consequence of those circumstances in which he placed mankind, operating on the nature which he gave them. From the beginning he knew *certainly*, that such and such circumstances, operating on such a creature as man, would *certainly* give origin to moral evil. Be man's freedom of choice perfect as can be conceived, he who gave to him his propensities, bounding his knowledge by an appointed limit, granting him only a certain measure of experience, and

* 'I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things.'—Isaiah xlv. 6.—'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?'—Amos iii. 6.

bringing him under the influence of motives of a certain degree of strength, knew what, under these circumstances, that choice would certainly be—knew that unless his propensities were altered, or his knowledge increased, or his experience extended, or the strength of his motives weakened, his choice would *certainly* be such as to involve the existence of moral evil. Knowing this, he altered nothing. He appointed, then, the propensities; he appointed the degree of knowledge; he appointed the measure of experience; he appointed the strength of motive; in a word, he appointed all the impressions of which he foresaw that the certain result would be the production of moral evil. The conclusion is inevitable, that he appointed the moral evil.

If, then, the existence of moral evil must be referred ultimately to the Deity, one of two things necessarily follows, either that he appointed it as a final end, or that he appointed it for some farther end. If he appointed it as a final end, he has rested in the production of misery as an ultimate object, a purpose which is not only not consistent with benevolence, but which could have been devised only by being purely malignant. If, on the contrary, moral evil be appointed for some further end, and that further end be not the infliction of pain, it must be the production of happiness; for no other can be conceived. Either, therefore, the Deity is malevolent, or evil in his hands is the means of producing ultimate good.

Further: the evidence, that physical evil is an instrument by which the most benevolent intentions are accomplished, is so clear and full, as to place the question, as far as physical evil is concerned, beyond all controversy. The sensation of hunger, for example, being painful, is in itself evil; but, to say nothing of the pleasure connected with the gratification of the appetite, hunger is the means by which an animal is induced to take food, which, by the constitution of its nature, is necessary to its existence. Here, then, is a case in which physical evil indubitably terminates in the production of good.

The proof of the beneficial operation of moral evil is equally decisive. The errors and crimes of which men are guilty teach them the most important lessons, awaken in their minds a sense of the excellence of virtue, a love of it, and a desire to possess it, of which they were wholly unconscious, and which are of the highest advantage to them in every future period of their being. A single instance of this kind decides the question; it affords an irrefragable proof, that evil is the means of producing incalculable good.

But, if we examine a little deeper, we shall find, in the very constitution of man's moral nature, irresistible evidence of the beneficial operation of moral evil. Moral evil is evil only because it produces misery; were it without this consequence, it would cease to be an object of aversion and avoidance. What, then, is the tendency of the misery of which moral evil is productive? Invariably the correction of moral disorder. Every deviation from rectitude *must* be attended with suffering; sooner or later, in a greater or less degree, it must necessarily be so; but that suffering is never without a beneficial tendency, never without a tendency to induce penitence for the offence, and a more steady and undeviating adherence in future to the path of virtue. This tendency, it is true, does not always accomplish at present its designed end; but in many cases it accomplishes it perfectly, and therefore there is the best reason to believe, that ultimately it will accomplish it in all. In the mean time, no example can be adduced, in all the records of human experience, in which the certain and final consequence of any species of moral evil is pure, unmixed misery.

While, then, it is thus impossible to prove that moral evil ever terminates in positive evil, it can be demonstrated, that it often terminates in positive good. Now, if we know not a single case in which moral evil terminates in positive evil, it is most fallacious to argue, that it may nevertheless have this termination, because there are some instances of moral evil, the beneficial tendency of which we cannot at present perceive; but, if we do know many cases in which moral evil terminates in positive good, it is reasonable and just to argue, that it may be thus productive of ultimate good, even in those very cases, the beneficial tendency of which we cannot at present trace.

That a state in which there is a mixture of physical and moral evil, in which man is exposed to danger and temptation, in which he has much to fear and much to hope, in which he may render himself extremely miserable or extremely happy, according to the rectitude or disorder of his conduct—in a word, that a state of discipline, such as all believe the present to be, is admirably adapted to develope and to strengthen his faculties, and to form and improve his virtues, is universally admitted. But all the developement and strength of his faculties, all the formation and improvement of his virtues, consequent to such a state, wholly depend on the prevalence of physical and moral evil. The constantly returning wants to which his nature is incident, the inadequacy and precariousness of the provision which is made to supply them, the absolute necessity he is under, from the danger of perishing by cold and hunger, to exert himself to render that provision more abundant and certain, afford the stimulus by which he is incited to cultivate the earth, and gradually to improve his condition, till, from that of a naked and houseless savage, he has surrounded himself with all the conveniences and comforts of civilized life.

Thus it is obvious, that physical evil is not only conducive to the improvement of the natural condition of man, but that it is in reality the very source to which he is indebted for the creation of all those conveniences and comforts which so eminently promote his happiness, and for the inestimable advantages which have resulted from the exercise of his faculties, in the cultivation of the various arts on which the fabrication of those conveniences and com-

forts depend. Nor is the tendency of moral evil to extend and improve his moral attainments less certain and direct. The most exalted virtues which can adorn human nature are not only promoted by, but could not possibly exist without, the prevalence of moral evil. If there were no contumely and injustice, there could be no forbearance; if men never violated the rights of men, nor neglected their mutual duties, there could be no forgiveness; if there were no tendency in human nature to pride, there could be no virtue in humility; if there were no wants, nor weaknesses, nor sorrows, and no dependence of men on each other, there could be no charity, no sympathy, no compassion, no generous forgetfulness of his own to minister to another's necessities; if there were no temptation, there could be no joy, no glory from successful resistence, and, if no danger, no fortitude and no victory.

In whatever shape or measure evil may assail the virtuous, it is universally admitted, that to them at least it is but another form of good. Whether he be placed under the discipline of physical or of moral evil, or of both, to the good man, according to the emphatic language of scripture, all will work together for good. When the psalmist says, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted,' he records that experience of the moral benefit of adversity, to the truth of which, wise and reflective men, in all ages and all climes, have born testimony—to the truth of which, all men, however various the sources of their sorrow, and however different their modes of faith, without a single dissentient voice, still bear testimony. Nor can it be said, that it is to the virtuous only, that adversity is thus the minister of good; for adversity is frequently the means by which the vicious are made virtuous. The position, therefore, that evil, both physical and moral, under the government of the Deity, is the means of producing ultimate good, appears to be established on evidence as indubitable and complete as any subject of human belief.

This reasoning, it is obvious, is not adduced to prove that the punishment inflicted on the wicked in a future state will be corrective, and ultimately restore them to purity and happiness. The precise point which the preceding arguments are intended to establish, is, that evil, both physical and moral, is the means of producing ultimate good. One single case in which physical good is clearly and certainly produced by physical evil—one single case in which moral good is clearly and certainly produced by moral evil, is sufficient to establish this position—especially since, as has been shown, it is utterly impossible to prove the contrary; that is, since no instance can be pointed out in all nature, and no example in all the records of human experience, which renders it certain, or even probable, that physical or moral evil is absolutely and ultimately evil.

From the position, then, that God is the author of that constitution of things in which physical and moral evil originates, that there are cases in nature, and instances in human experience, in which good indubitably results from evil, and especially that the influence of adversity, in the formation and improvement of human virtue, is oftentimes extremely great—from these positions, it does not *directly* follow, that all mankind will ultimately be made pure and happy; but it does *directly* follow, that evil is the means of producing ultimate good.

It does not seem possible to resist the force of this reasoning in any other way than by denying the position on which it is founded, namely, that God is the author of evil, and by ascribing the benefit which all admit sometimes results from evil, not to the natural operation of evil, but to God's counteracting and overruling it for good.

With regard to the position, that God is not the author of evil, conscious as every human being must be, of the inadequacy of his faculties to comprehend fully the origin of evil, it becomes him to speak on the subject with profound humility. But surely it is not presumption to endeavour to form a clear, while it is confessed that in the present state it is not possible to form an adequate, conception of it. In tracing back the origin of evil, then, unless the mind be paralyzed by false fear, the offspring of false system, and unless the doctrine of Manicheeism be revived, it should seem no more possible to stop till we have arrived at the appointment of the Deity, than, in tracing back the series of second causes, it is possible to stop till we have arrived at the great First Cause of all things.

The argument, that the First Cause must be himself uncaused, because an infinite number of dependent beings requires a first and independent cause, as much as any one in the series, appears to be clear and irresistible;—equally clear and irresistible is the argument, that the same Being is the author of evil, because he is the author of the constitution of nature, both physical and moral, and because he appointed all the circumstances, the operation of which he foreknew would certainly involve the existence of evil.

It deserves, too, to be well considered, that the hypothesis, that evil is the appointment of the Deity, for the promotion of greater ultimate good, is adequate to remove every difficulty; while the doctrine, that he partially counteracts its operation, is extremely imperfect. Of physical evil, it surely cannot be said that God has no other relation to it than that of benevolent counteraction. Physical evil is as strictly dependent on the operation of the laws of nature, as any physical phenomena whatever. The structure of the bodies of animals, by which they are subject to disease and suffering—certain constitutions of the air, which at one time directly impair or destroy animal life, and at another blast the fruits of the earth, by which life is supported—earthquakes, pestilence, and the calamities incident to them—the evil which arises in all these cases is as strictly dependent on the operation of the laws of nature, as the gravitation of bodies to the earth. To him who appointed these laws

this evil must necessarily be referred; and it is obviously insufficient to say, of any benefit which may result from their operation, that it is the consequence only of his benevolent counteraction.

In like manner, the suffering connected with moral disorder as necessarily results from the constitution of the moral nature of man, as physical evil results from the constitution of nature. That man must be rendered unhappy by every deviation from rectitude, is as much the consequence of a law of his nature, as the due nourishment of his body by the reception of nutritious food. That inestimable advantages result from this moral constitution, is universally admitted; and it is obviously insufficient to say of these, that they are the consequence merely of God's counteracting and overruling evil; for surely there can be no more certain evidence, that God has appointed or ordained a thing, than that he has made it the invariable result of a general law.

In a word, the brief, but full answer to the hypothesis we are considering, is, that, if God benevolently counteract evil, he makes it the instrument of good. The imagination cannot conceive of his counteracting evil in any other way than by his making it the instrument of producing greater ultimate good. Upon this very hypothesis, therefore, it must be admitted, that evil is sometimes at least the instrument of producing ultimate good. The essential difference between God's benevolent counteraction of evil and his benevolent causation of it, is, that, according to the former hypothesis, the beneficial effect of his interference is partial and imperfect; according to the latter, it is universal and complete.

Upon the whole, it is perfectly evident, that neither the nature nor the government of the Deity can be benevolent, unless evil be, in every instance and every measure in which it prevails, through the vast system which he at first constituted, and which he constantly superintends, not an end, but the means to some further end, namely, that of promoting ultimate good—good, higher, in nature, and greater in degree, than could have been produced without it.

Many attempts have been made to reconcile the existence of natural and moral evil with infinite wisdom and goodness, on the principle, that, by the operation of evil, the sum of happiness produced to mankind collectively is greater than the sum of misery. It has even been conceived, that this may be the case, though by far the greater number of mankind, after having been exposed to sin and misery on earth, not only fail to obtain happiness in a future state, but suffer excruciating and unceasing torment through all the ages of eternity. How the few who escape this tremendous and general ruin can, by any measure or duration of felicity, cause the collective sum of happiness to exceed that of a misery which must ever be as lasting and more general than itself, it seems impossible to conceive. It is believed that those who die in unrepented sin will be as greatly wretched as the penitent and pious will be greatly happy—that the disproportion in their number will ever be at least as great as it is at present, and the disproportion in their destiny infinitely greater; how, then, upon the supposition of unmitigated, unmixed, and everlasting misery, is it possible, that the evil which has produced this misery can be the means of increasing the collective sum of happiness?

It is only necessary to bring the mind to the steady and distinct conception of what is really supposed in a misery which involves the great majority of mankind, and which is at once as great as can be endured, and as lasting as eternity, to perceive that its existence is impossible, unless the author of the system in which it prevails be cruel and malignant in the highest degree. That myriads and myriads of human beings, constituting a number so vast, that the imagination can form no adequate conception of it, should be doomed to inexpressible torment, and that this tremendous mass of *never-ending* misery should be adopted by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, as the means of producing a greater collective sum of happiness to his creatures, is an hypothesis which the heart, were it permitted to indulge its genuine feeling, must execrate, and the understanding, did not system prostrate it in the dust, reject with indignation.

There is in this hypothesis a difficulty which ought never to be lost sight of. It supposes the great majority of mankind to be sacrificed (and O, how sacrificed!) to comparatively a few; while, to the great majority thus sacrificed, in no period of their being, in no manner, in no measure, is any compensation afforded. In no other part of the great system with which we are acquainted, is there any thing like this! In the whole economy of nature, there is nothing bearing the slightest analogy to it!

The wisdom and goodness of the Deity, in the permission of natural and moral evil, may be perfectly vindicated, and can be perfectly vindicated, only on the supposition, that, considered in relation to the entire period of his being, *it increases the sum of happiness to every individual.* And that this will be the ultimate issue of evil, is confirmed by every thing which reason and experience teach concerning its nature and tendency, and is opposed by nothing but the prejudices of a system which leads to consequences truly horrible, and which is supported by no appearance in nature, by no testimony of experience, and by no induction of reason.

If it be said that this is assuming more than is absolutely necessary, to vindicate the divine perfections, it must at least be granted, that the lowest ground it is possible to assume, is, that, how much soever evil may prevail, every individual will nevertheless experience, the whole period of his being considered, more happiness than misery. If this position be denied, no ingenuity can reconcile the prevalence of evil with the government of infinite wisdom and goodness. If it be granted, the doctrine of endless misery must be aban-

doned at once, and the mind must ultimately rest, (as will be largely shown hereafter,) in the conclusion, that evil is designed to be, and actually is, the means of increasing the ultimate sum of happiness to every individual.

If it be objected, that, according to this view of evil, the Deity has himself violated the command which he has given to his creatures, and has done evil in order that good may come, it is replied, that the consequence may be readily admitted, and that the principle which justifies the divine procedure is obvious. To allow to such a being as man the liberty of doing evil with a good design, would be fatal, because he cannot *certainly* foresee the effect of his conduct, nor control events in such a manner as to *secure* his purpose. But God, being possessed of perfect knowledge and almighty power, must be acquainted with the result of all possible combinations of circumstances, and must be able to secure it against all miscarriage. It may therefore be supremely benevolent in him, to do what it would be ruinous in man to attempt.

From the whole of what has been said, then, it appears that we may, without presumption, with the full concurrence of reason, and on the clear warrant of scripture, affirm, that, when the Deity placed man in such circumstances as he foresaw would be attended with the production and indulgence of evil passions, he at the same time perceived, that under his direction these passions would produce, *to mankind collectively, and to every individual particularly*, a greater sum of happiness than could have existed without them. That the evil which results from the indulgence of the bad passions of mankind *may* be made the means of eradicating them, and of training the mind to purity and benevolence, we have, as has been fully shown, unquestionable proof in the daily events of life. This, then, which we see to be their effect, with regard to some individuals at present, it is contended, will be their ultimate effect with respect to all mankind—that this is the final cause of their existence, and THAT THE GREAT DESIGN OF THE DEITY IS TO BRING ALL HIS INTELLIGENT OFFSPRING TO A STATE OF PURITY AND HAPPINESS.

This doctrine reconciles every difficulty, and throws a glorious and cheering light on all the dispensations of the Deity. If it be true, every thing was planned by benevolence, every thing is guided by benevolence, every thing will terminate in benevolence, in eternal and ever-increasing felicity to all.

This doctrine, which represents the character of the Universal Parent in the most glorious and affecting light, and is benevolent in its tendency beyond any other opinion whatever, has been opposed with much violence by some of the best of men, and the worst have as loudly exclaimed against it. The prejudices of the good and the bad, of the pious and the profane, equally oppose it; yet there is no other truth which seems to be supported by so many *different* appearances, or by evidence derived from so many different sources. And, since it throws so much light on the character and dispensations of the Deity, and is replete with such solid consolation, it may be useful to examine it somewhat at length—first considering some of the arguments which appear to favour it, and next the objections which are usually brought to oppose it.

Because this doctrine maintains that mankind will finally be restored from sin, and from the present and future misery which is its consequence, to a state of purity and happiness, and that this will ultimately be the case with respect to every individual of the human race, it is sometimes termed the doctrine of UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, which phrase, merely for the sake of brevity, we may hereafter frequently employ.

Some dispute, however, has arisen respecting the nature of the evidence which alone can establish this doctrine. It will be vain to proceed, therefore, before the principles are settled, upon which it will be proper to conduct the investigation. The nature of the evidence, which will be deemed legitimate and satisfactory, must be determined before it will avail to adduce any.

PART SECOND.

INTRODUCTION.

OF THE KIND OF EVIDENCE WHICH IS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINE OF THE ULTIMATE PURITY AND HAPPINESS OF ALL MANKIND.

Some persons maintain that the only evidence which can establish the doctrine of Universal Restoration is the *direct* testimony of scripture. They seem to think that every proof, however solid in itself, if it cannot be adduced in the very words, or at least if it be not borne out by the express testimony of revelation, is insufficient.

Others contend, that there is nothing in this doctrine which can prevent the application of such principles or modes of reasoning to it, as are universally deemed just and satisfactory when applied to other subjects—that, if there be any doctrine of religion, of which we can obtain a well-founded assurance, by considerations which do not derive their force from the express declarations of scripture, or which are altogether independent of it, there can be no reason why the doctrine of Universal Restoration may not be one of these, and that, if this opinion can be established upon a just and solid principle, it is sufficient, whether that principle be derived from revelation, or from any other source.

If the first of these classes will be content to say, 'No evidence will be sufficient to establish this opinion, unless it harmonize with scripture,' there will remain no difference whatever between them; and surely it is absurd to endeavour to establish a distinction where there ought to be the greatest union. Every principle, from whatever source it be derived, if it be just, must harmonize with scripture, and all scripture, if it be genuine, and rightly understood, must harmonize with every just principle.

Evidence founded upon a just principle is satisfactory, from whatever source it be derived; the only question which can affect the solidity of the conviction it produces, is whether it be just, not whether it have this or that origin. One single solid argument in favour of the doctrine of Universal Restoration, deduced from the perfections of God, for example, is sufficient to establish its truth. One single solid argument deduced from scripture is likewise sufficient; but, if a solid argument can be derived from both, the conviction produced will be more complete. In a word, if this doctrine be true, it can be established both by reason and by revelation; if it be false, it can be refuted by both.

It is for this reason, that the evidence of both will be adduced in the following pages. The testimony of reason adds an unspeakable value to the declarations of scripture—not because established scripture wants the assistance of man's reason, but because, if a doctrine be contrary to reason, we know that it is not the word of God. It betrays an ignorance of the nature of both, to pay no regard to a clear deduction of reason because it is not revelation, or to maintain that what is contrary to reason is revealed in scripture; for truth cannot be inconsistent with reason, nor can scripture and truth clash.

In adducing the evidence in favour of the doctrine of the ultimate restoration of all mankind to purity and happiness, it may be proper to begin with the statement of that which is derived from considerations which have no direct reference to the *positive* declarations of scripture—then to examine the objections which are urged against it, whether derived from scripture or from other sources, and, in the last place, to state those express declarations of scripture which appear to establish it.

If it can be shown, that all the perfections of the Deity, that the nature of man, and the nature and design of punishment, are completely in favour of this doctrine, that the objections which have been urged against it, whether derived from reason or revelation, may be satisfactorily removed, that the arguments which have been supposed to establish contrary opinions are not conclusive, and that the scriptures contain some passages which can have no meaning unless this doctrine be supposed, others which cannot be true unless it be admitted, and others which seem directly and positively to favour it—this would seem sufficient to convince a candid inquirer of its truth; because, in this case, the evidence in its favour will not only be direct and positive, but will be founded also on the most firm and solid principles, and there will be no evidence against it. It will be the object of the following pages to establish, in order, each of the above positions.

It may be proper, however, to observe, that arguments may in reality be derived from scripture, which do not at first sight appear to be so. Revelation has poured so much light upon the mind, and has led us into such a just way of reasoning, concerning God, concerning his design in creation, and his government of the world, that our conceptions and arguments, even when they do not appear at all to depend upon this heavenly guide, attain a degree of sublimity and truth, to which they would never have arrived without it; and we often appear to be following the deductions of our own understanding, when in reality we are only repeating in other words, and with other asso-

ciations, the declarations of scripture. Why, without any direct or apparent dependence upon revelation, are we now able to form such pure and exalted conceptions of the Supreme Being, as were totally unknown to the great sages of antiquity? It is because revelation has furnished us with the light which has conducted us to these noble and just conclusions. Of our views of the perfections of the Deity, of his dispensations to his creatures, of his works and of his ways—in a word, of all the principles upon which the subsequent reasoning is founded, this observation is peculiarly true. Although, therefore, the arguments contained in the second part of this work may not appear, at first sight, to be founded upon the scriptures, it is not just to conclude that they have a different origin; for, *in so far as they are true*, they must be, either directly or indirectly, derived from it, since there is no reason to believe that they could have been formed by any mind which had not been illumined by this divine light.

The evidence in favour of the doctrine of Universal Restoration, distinct from that afforded by the express declarations of scripture, may be arranged under three heads, namely: that which is deducible from the perfections of God, from the nature of man, and from the nature and design of punishment.

It is proper to say, that the arguments adduced under each of these particulars are distinct from those afforded by the express declarations of scripture; because, how much soever they may really depend upon the light of revelation, (and for the reason already assigned they may depend upon it in a very great degree,) yet they are framed without any direct reference to it, and seem in general to be derived from the nature of things. Reasoning of this kind is peculiarly satisfactory; and, if the *positive* declarations of scripture can be shown to coincide with it, to include it, and to be founded upon it, it must produce a conviction as strong as can be effected by any thing which is not an object of sense, or which cannot be proved upon the principles of geometry.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, DERIVED FROM THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

SECTION I.

Of the Goodness of God.

Were it assumed, that he who gave us existence, and bestowed upon us all things richly to enjoy, is a Being of infinite goodness, it would be only taking for granted what all Christians, and even all theists, allow. It may be proper, however, to state briefly the evidence of the perfect benignity of the Universal Parent.

Because the phenomena of nature cannot be accounted for without the supposition of a self-existent Being, the original cause of all things, we conclude that such a Being exists, and that, since he is the cause of all other things and beings, he must be independent of them. Because he who could create such a world as this, must be able to do any thing which is not in itself a contradiction, we infer that his power is without limits. Because the exhibitions of wisdom, in every part of nature with which we are acquainted, surpass all assignable limits, and because we cannot but conceive, that the intelligence which is displayed in the constitution of the world is adequate to the performance of any thing which is in its own nature possible, we conclude also, that his wisdom is infinite. From these principles, his goodness follows as a necessary consequence.

For the Original Cause of all things, being absolutely independent, being infinite in power and wisdom, must be good, since evil is the result of want, weakness, or error. But he who is infinite in power can have no want; neither can he have any weakness; and he who created all things, and gave them the relations they possess, cannot but know them perfectly, and therefore must be incapable of error.

That evil can arise from no other sources than those which have been mentioned, will appear evident from considering the origin of any form of it with which we are acquainted. Whence, for example, arise envy, malice, hatred, injustice? Envy is the malicious coveting of a good possessed by another; something is desired which cannot be attained.—He, then, who has it in his power to obtain all good, must be incapable of envy. Injustice is the withholding of a good, real or supposed, from another whose right it is; he who has it in his power to obtain all good, must therefore be incapable of injustice. And the same may be said of every description of moral evil whatever.

If an intelligent being perceive perfectly the true relation of all things to each other, so as to be incapable of mistake, and if at the same time he have the whole of possibility in his power, he must, in the nature of things, be incapable of evil; because he cannot commit evil through ignorance, and there can be nothing to induce him to act with an evil design. This, then, is exactly the idea which we form of the Supreme Intelligence.

If this deduction of the goodness of God, from the other essential attributes of his nature, be just, it will be confirmed by the appearances of his works. What he has done will satisfy us that we are right in our conception of what he is.

In endeavouring to ascertain from his works, whether or not the Deity be benevolent, we must conduct our investigation in the same manner as when we endeavour to discover his other perfections; because, in the objects around us, we perceive so many marks of design, such various and exquisite contrivance, we conclude that their Author is intelligent. In like manner, if it appear that this design is a good design, that this contrivance ministers

not only to convenience, but to enjoyment, it will follow that its Author is good.

Now there are two facts, of the certainty of which no one who examines the state of the animal creation can doubt, which place the goodness of the Creator beyond all question. The first is, that pleasure is imparted to animal sensations, when no cause can be assigned for it but the gratification of the animal; the second is that there is more happiness than misery in the world.*

The first, if it can be clearly proved, affords a conviction, the certainty of which cannot be exceeded by any kind of evidence whatever —not even by that which we derive from geometry or from sense. The determination to create an animal supposes a determination to endow it with all the faculties which are necessary to its existence. These faculties, therefore, however multiplied, beautiful or exquisite, cannot prove the goodness of the Creator; because, being necessary to the existence of the animal, they must have formed a part of any design to create, whether good or malevolent. But if these faculties be so constituted, that they not only give existence, but make that existence happy—if in general they cannot be exercised without affording enjoyment as well as life, then there is not only design, but good design. Then it is evident, that the Creator not only meant to give existence, but to make that existence a blessing.

With all the animal functions, then, this is the case. They all minister to enjoyment, while they sustain the mysterious principle of life. There is not a single exception.— There is not one animal function, the common and natural exercise of which is painful. There is not one whose natural exercise is not productive of pleasure.† Whence could this possibly happen but from the goodness of the Creator?

He who is infinite in power might have so constituted an animal, as to make the exercise of every function which is necessary to its existence productive of exquisite suffering; and had his nature been malignant, and his design in creation been to gratify a malignant disposition, he would certainly have done so. Constituted as animals at present are, it is necessary to the continuance of their life, that they should eat. The act of eating might have been made productive of exquisite misery, and the animal have been infallibly impelled to it, by making the pain of hunger still greater than that of eating. Here, then, was an opportunity of diffusing over the whole animal creation a source of continual torment. But, instead of this, the act is made pleasurable, and thus becomes the source of continual gratification.— How can this be accounted for, but upon the supposition, that he who had the diffusion of both equally in his power, and who chose to diffuse happiness rather than misery, is good?

Constituted as animals at present are, and placed amidst such objects as those which surround them, it was necessary that they should have the senses of sight and of touch. Now the eye might have been so constructed, as to receive from every object the same kind of impression as is felt when it is cast upon any thing that is monstrous. The sense of touch might have been so formed, as to impart, upon the contact of every object, a sensation similar to that which is felt when the surface of the body is pierced with thorns; and, as the body must always be in contact with some external object, this torment might have been experienced during every moment of existence. Why, then, is this not the case?— Why, on the contrary, do we continually receive the most exquisite gratification from all our senses? It can be resolved into nothing but the pure benignity of the Creator.

This annexation of pleasure to the exercise of animal functions, when that pleasure is not at all necessary to animal existence, is a decisive proof of the goodness of the Deity; for it is to produce happiness without doing any thing else; it is to rest in it as an ultimate object; it is to do this in proportion as happiness prevails beyond what is necessary to life —that is, in proportion as it prevails at all.— But to produce happiness for its own sake, to rest in it as an ultimate object, is of the very essence of benevolence, and pure and perfect benevolence can do no more. Neither can such a provision for enjoyment possibly arise from any thing but benevolence; for an evil nature must necessarily be incapable of it.— In proportion, then, as happiness is diffused over the creation of God, is the plenitude of the proof that he is good.

The force of this reasoning will appear to increase in proportion as the faculties of an animal are exalted, because the extension of the capacity of enjoyment affords a greater opportunity for the display of that goodness which provides for its full and constant supply. Thus man, endowed with higher faculties than those which characterize mere animal existence, is capable of higher happiness. To him, in addition to the pleasures of sense, for the enjoyment of which he is fitted by the constitution of his nature, no less than other animals, are afforded the nobler gratifications which arise from the exercise of his intellectual faculties. These faculties are given him as the means of improving his condition.— Continual exertion is indispensable to their developement; and so admirably is the structure of society adapted to their nature, that no one can exist in it without exerting them. Either to procure the means of comfortable subsistence in the rank in which he is placed, or to raise himself to a higher station, or to obtain that measure of knowledge, and that degree of general cultivation, which the progress of society has rendered indispensable to his condition, every one finds himself compel-

*Each of these positions has been stated and illustrated, with admirable force and beauty, by Paley, in his Natural Theology.

†Indeed, the very application of the term natural is a decisive proof of the goodness of the Deity. When the functions of an animal are so exercised, as to afford it vigour, ease, and enjoyment, we say it is in a natural state.

led to the continual exertion of his faculties. By the operation of the same causes, arts are cultivated, manufactures flourish, commerce is extended, science facilitates the movements of the vast and complicated machine which is set in motion, and literature unfolds the treasures which reward the culture of its ample regions. To society, the advantage of this constant activity is incalculable, and it is of inestimable utility to the individual. In these pursuits, his highest powers are called forth and invigorated, and his purest and noblest pleasures experienced. Yet the intellectual faculties are never exerted for the sake of the pleasure they afford. Pleasure is the unthought of, but the invariable consequence of their exercise. Distinction, fame, wealth, are the objects for which they are exerted; pleasure is the unsought, the incidental, yet the almost constant result of their exertion.—This pleasure, therefore, is as purely a gift of the Creator, as that which arises from the gratification of the senses, and proves as decisively his benevolence. It is pleasure gratuitously added to the exercise of faculties which might be as perfectly exerted without it as with it; it affords a beautiful example of pleasure rested in as an ultimate object.

This pleasure, which is connected with the exercise of a cultivated understanding, is of constant occurrence; it is pure and unalloyed; it increases with the improvement of art and the knowledge of nature, and has no other limit than the perfection of the one, and the boundary of the other. He whose perceptions are refined by cultivation, is as if he were endowed with new senses, and he walks continually forth into a world of being and of beauty, to which other men are strangers.—Every thing is to him the minister of improvement or of gratification. The sun, the earth, the ocean, the mountain's towering height, the green and golden vale, stretching far out below its 'mantle gay,'

And every odorous plant and brighter thing,
Born of the sunny skies and weeping rain,
That, from the bosom of the Spring,
Starts into life and beauty once again—

every object that strikes the sense, or that awakens fancy, raises in such a mind trains of ideas the most soothing, the most elevating and the most delightful. And yet, that a pile of ruins, 'some abbey's mouldering towers'—that the productions of art, or the discoveries of science—that painting, music, poetry, eloquence, philosophy, should excite or recall pleasurable emotions, is no more a necessary consequence of the exertion of the mental faculties, than that a beautiful colour or a harmonious sound should agreeably affect its appropriate sense. Pleasure is gratuitously superadded by the abounding goodness of the Creator. And when the pure nature of that pleasure is considered, the abundance of the objects, and the frequency of the occasions which excite it, together with its wonderful tendency to expand the mind, and thereby to enlarge the capacity it supplies, it is surely impossible not to admire and adore the goodness which, in thus constituting the human faculties, has made such ample and unfailing provision for human enjoyment.

The second fact upon which the benevolence of the Deity is founded, is, that there is more happiness than misery through the whole of the animal creation. Were it not so, we should see all animals tired of life, and eager to throw off the burden of existence. But the reverse is the fact. What exertions do they not all make to prolong their being! How are all their faculties continually upon the stretch to preserve themselves from danger! How various, how wonderful are their resources!—How tenaciously do they cling to existence, even to its latest moment!

What a scene of enjoyment does the tribe of insects, of fishes, of all the inferior animals exhibit, from the beginning to the end of life! Those whose confirmation fits them for motion, how delighted are they to run, to fly, to leap, to swim! How incessantly are they gliding from place to place, without any apparent object, deriving gratification from the mere exercise of their limbs! Those which delight in rest, how happy are they in the loneliness of the shade—in basking in the sun, or grazing in the field! In a summer evening, how exhilarating is it to the spirits, to leave for a while the busy hum of men, and wander beneath the clear blue sky, and amidst Nature's own works! What millions of happy creatures every where surround us! Above, around, beneath—every thing is in motion, and every thing is happy. The air, the earth, the water, every tree, and every shrub, and every little blade of grass teems with delighted existence. Scarcely can we fix the eye upon a single spot in which there is not life and happiness! Which of the millions of creatures that press upon our sight is in pain? Which of them does not by every movement declare, that, to the full measure of its capacity, it is happy?

This felicity seems to belong to, and to characterize animal life, during the whole period of its existence. It is exempt from almost all the sources of infelicity which impair the happiness of man, and fill him with gloom and sorrow. It is not subject to much disease, and that which accident or natural decay does induce, is of short continuance. It spends the measure of its days in sportiveness and pleasure, and when its last moment comes, it arrives without giving any previous indication of its approach, and all consciousness ceases suddenly, and with little pain.

Now, when we consider the extent and the *fulness* of creation—when we remember that it is scarcely possible, as has just been observed, to fix the eye upon the minutest spot, where there is not life—when, under this impression, we endeavour to calculate how many creatures there sometimes are upon one single leaf—upon all the leaves on one tree—how many, therefore, in one field—how many in all the fields which the eye can take in at a single glance—how many in all the fields in one

country—when we remember that each of these creatures is in a state of positive happiness, and then endeavour to calculate the collective sum of enjoyment in one country—can we help exclaiming, What an effort of benevolence was creation! Can we doubt the goodness of its Author?

Even among men, there is in reality much less misery than is commonly imagined. Many persons can recount every period of their life in which they were unhappy; others can scarcely mention a single misfortune which ever befel them; and those on whom the afflictive dispensations of Heaven have fallen more heavily, how distinctly are these days of visitation marked in their memory! But can they recount with equal facility their days of happiness? Can they number up, not their moments or their hours, but even their weeks and their months of enjoyment? They have forgotten the periods of their happiness; they remember those only in which they were miserable. The reason is obvious. The one is a common occurrence, the usual and ordinary state of things—the other is a singular event. It happened only at distant intervals, was quite out of the general course, and therefore the mind distinctly marked, and the memory retains it. We notice an eclipse; we talk of it, but we do not so much observe the daily splendour of the sun. We may enjoy its light and heat many months without thinking of it, and the reason is the same in both cases. We observe what is unusual, but that which is familiar makes no remarkable impression. This consideration alone is sufficient to convince us, that we enjoy infinitely more than we suffer.

But we are able to go much farther, and to affirm, that even in those periods, few as they are, in which we were unhappy, and which we have been accustomed to consider as distinguished by misery alone, we really suffered very little, compared with what we have been in the habit of believing. We are seized, let us suppose, with an acute disease. It attacks some vital organ, induces extreme debility, and threatens the speedy extinction of life. All this time, the bodily suffering inflicted is often slight. The most violent diseases—that is, those which most surely and suddenly destroy life—are by no means painful. Indeed, those which occasion great pain are remarkably few, and those which produce both severe and constant pain are still more rare. Yet, from the general mode of expression, and perhaps from the prevailing impression of the mind, it would seem as if much suffering were experienced from the commencement till the complete termination of a disease; but this is certainly not the case. In many diseases of a most afflictive nature, hour after hour passes away without any thing being felt which can justly be termed pain. Paroxysms of suffering sometimes occur, but it is seldom that they last long. Rest and ease speedily succeed; and indeed exacerbation implies remission. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that these intervals are often amongst the sweetest and most valued moments of existence—the preceding pain giving a keen and exquisite relish for enjoyment—while the thoughts with which the mind amuses itself in sickness, the hope of recovery, and the attentions of kind and tender friends, greatly lessen and counterbalance the actual sum of misery endured. Indeed, disease, taking the most extensive view of it, seems destructive to the life rather than to the enjoyment of the sentient being; and, in fact, the first is the final cause of disease; the second is only an accidental consequence.

These observations may be applied with equal justice to the afflictions of the mind. Whatever be the nature or magnitude of the calamity with which it is visited, it is never constantly, nor even for a long period together, under its influence. Whoever will consider the conduct of his mind under the severest misfortune, will soon be convinced of this fact. He will perceive that a thousand objects came in to attract his attention from the subject of his sorrow, of which he was unconscious at the time, and to which he yielded without knowing it—that the mind has numberless sources of pleasure, to which in its most gloomy hour, it soon spontaneously betakes itself, and that it is impossible to chain it down to perpetual afflictive thought. If he will carefully compare the number of minutes in which he is sure that his attention was fixed on the subject of his misfortune, with those in which he is satisfied that it was occupied with other objects, he will be so far from believing he contemplated it incessantly, that he will wonder he thought of it so little. At particular periods, indeed, he dwelt upon and felt all his wretchedness; these periods, perhaps, are distinctly marked in his memory, but he has forgotten the hours of abstraction from his sorrow which intervened, and for the same reason that he has forgotten so many of his peaceful days. Now the bestowment of this constitution of mind is of the very essence of benevolence. Language cannot express the kindness there is in it, nor are we at all able to estimate the relief we owe to it from the afflictions which befall us.

Thus, then, it appears that pleasure not only preponderates over pain, but that this is often the case even in the most unhappy periods of existence. And in the ordinary circumstances of life, how great is that pleasure! How various, how exquisite, how far surpassing our ability to esimate! Contemplate a person placed in the ordinary circumstances of life; suppose him addicted to no particular vice, nor practising any exemplary virtue—neither highly favoured with the gifts of understanding nor of fortune; of what pleasure is he capable, and what pleasure does he actually enjoy? What gratification does he every hour receive from his different senses—from the exercise of his intellectual faculties—from his social affections—from the relations which connect him with his fellow-beings, those relations so dear and sacred, which constitute him a father, a husband, a brother, a friend!

But suppose him not only addicted to no vice, but highly virtuous, to feel a deep sense of his obligations to the Supreme Being, to love him, to take a sincere pleasure in learning and obeying his laws, and in preparing to meet him in those blissful regions, where he will enjoy such superior displays of his perfections and glory; suppose him to consider all his fellow-creatures as brethren, to feel for them a real and fraternal affection, and to delight in doing them all the good offices in his power; in a word, suppose him to be a sincere disciple of Jesus Christ; what exquisite felicity does such a being enjoy! How sublime in its nature! How immortal in its duration!

How nearly does it assimilate him to the Supreme Being himself! Who can believe that such faculties and such happiness can be bounded by the current of time, or swept away amidst the low and frivolous objects which it is bearing to eternal oblivion—that they are imparted only to give dignity to the triumph of death, and importance to the spoil of the grave, and that the very benignity of their Author is questionable?

There is yet another circumstance in the constitution of our nature, which proves both the benevolence of the principle on which it is constructed, and the preponderance of happiness actually experienced, namely, the pleasure afforded by retrospection and anticipation. The fact, that the recollection of the places we have visited, the persons we have seen, the companions with whom we have associated, the occupations in which we have engaged, and the general train of events which have befallen us, and which constitute the little history of ourselves, is pleasurable, is seldom denied. And there are places, and persons, and periods—periods in some cases comprehending months and years which we can never think of without extreme delight. Hence the magic there is in the name of country, home, and friend, and hence the pleasure, perhaps the most exquisite the mind ever tastes, with which it dwells on some bright and blissful moments of existence, or on some spots with the recollection of the objects of which are inseparately associated its own thoughts and emotions. Recollection, it is true, does not in general afford this acute and exquisite pleasure, but in general it does afford pleasure.

But recollection is only the compound vestige of all the pleasures and pains which have been associated with the objects contemplated. If, therefore, recollection be upon the whole pleasurable, the balance must of necessity have been in favour of pleasure.

And the feeling with which we look forward to the future is for the most part not only pleasurable, but exhilerating. Hope is the balm of life. As many pains which once produced considerable suffering are softened, and even converted into actual pleasures, so the fear which occasionally mingles with hope is seldom sufficient to deprive it of its charm. But in fact we live in the past and in the future. The pleasures and pains produced by present circumstances have very inconsiderable influence on present feeling; that feeling depends almost entirely on recollection and anticipation, and these faculties are made the sources of pleasure. There is nothing in the structure of the bodily frame more indicative of wisdom, than this mental constitution is demonstrative of goodness.

The constitution of our social nature, also, is such as to ensure the continual augmentation of happiness. We are made mutually dependent. It is an essential part of the plan of the Deity, that the highest happiness enjoyed by man should be communicated by man. But the happiness one person receives from another endears to him the author of his pleasure, and makes him wish to show to his benefactor the like kindness. If, on the other hand, a person be the occasion of misery to another, this not only checks any expressions of kindness, but puts the injured on thinking how he can prevent a repetition of the injury, and, by the infliction of positive pain, make the evildoer feel that he cannot invade another's happiness without losing his own. Thus in a twofold manner self-love is rendered the instrument of increasing happiness. The operation of this principle must therefore be to augment benevolence without limits, to check malevolence in its origin, and ultimately to destroy it. It is not possible to conceive a more satisfactory evidence of the provision which the creator has made, in the very frame of our nature, for our happiness. But it does more than this. It proves, in the clearest manner, the infinite benevolence of the Creator himself; for it renders benevolence inseparable from knowledge—it shows that benevolence must arise in all beings in proportion to their experience of good and evil, and their acquaintance with causes and effects. Hence it has been most justly argued, that benevolence arises as necessarily in an intelligent nature, as self-love does in a sensitive nature—that moral distinctions are founded in truth—that every being who perceives truth must perceive them—that the Deity, therefore, who perceives all truth, must perceive them in all their extent and obligation, and be more under their influence than any other being. But the chief of all moral distinctions is, that it is right to communicate happiness, and wrong to produce misery. This distinction, God, as intelligent, must perceive, and the perception of it is the same with the approbation of beneficence, and the disapprobation of its contrary. A stronger argument cannot exist. It shows that the principle of benevolence in the Deity is implied in his perception of the truth, and that it is just as certain that he is good, as it is that we say right when we say that happiness is better than misery. The nature of happiness is better than misery. The nature of happiness and misery being such, that a preference of one of them to the other must arise in every mind, in proportion to the degree in which they are known, it follows, with the plainest evidence, that the Supreme Intelligence must be original and supreme beneve-

bringing him under the influence of motives of a certain degree of strength, knew what, under these circumstances, that choice would certainly be—knew that unless his propensities were altered, or his knowledge increased, or his experience extended, or the strength of his motives weakened, his choice would *certainly* be such as to involve the existence of moral evil. Knowing this, he altered nothing. He appointed, then, the propensities; he appointed the degree of knowledge; he appointed the measure of experience; he appointed the strength of motive; in a word, he appointed all the impressions of which he foresaw that the certain result would be the production of moral evil. The conclusion is inevitable, that he appointed the moral evil.

If, then, the existence of moral evil must be referred ultimately to the Deity, one of two things necessarily follows, either that he appointed it as a final end, or that he appointed it for some farther end. If he appointed it as a final end, he has rested in the production of misery as an ultimate object, a purpose which is not only not consistent with benevolence, but which could have been devised only by being purely malignant. If, on the contrary, moral evil be appointed for some further end, and that further end be not the infliction of pain, it must be the production of happiness; for no other can be conceived. Either, therefore, the Deity is malevolent, or evil in his hands is the means of producing ultimate good.

Further: the evidence, that physical evil is an instrument by which the most benevolent intentions are accomplished, is so clear and full, as to place the question, as far as physical evil is concerned, beyond all controversy. The sensation of hunger, for example, being painful, is in itself evil; but, to say nothing of the pleasure connected with the gratification of the appetite, hunger is the means by which an animal is induced to take food, which, by the constitution of its nature, is necessary to its existence. Here, then, is a case in which physical evil indubitably terminates in the production of good.

The proof of the beneficial operation of moral evil is equally decisive. The errors and crimes of which men are guilty teach them the most important lessons, awaken in their minds a sense of the excellence of virtue, a love of it, and a desire to possess it, of which they were wholly unconscious, and which are of the highest advantage to them in every future period of their being. A single instance of this kind decides the question; it affords an irrefragable proof, that evil is the means of producing incalculable good.

But, if we examine a little deeper, we shall find, in the very constitution of man's moral nature, irresistible evidence of the beneficial operation of moral evil. Moral evil is evil only because it produces misery; were it without this consequence, it would cease to be an object of aversion and avoidance. What, then, is the tendency of the misery of which moral evil is productive? Invariably the correction of moral disorder. Every deviation from rectitude *must* be attended with suffering; sooner or later, in a greater or less degree, it must necessarily be so; but that suffering is never without a beneficial tendency, never without a tendency to induce penitence for the offence, and a more steady and undeviating adherence in future to the path of virtue. This tendency, it is true, does not always accomplish at present its designed end; but in many cases it accomplishes it perfectly, and therefore there is the best reason to believe, that ultimately it will accomplish it in all. In the mean time, no example can be adduced, in all the records of human experience, in which the certain and final consequence of any species of moral evil is pure, unmixed misery.

While, then, it is thus impossible to prove that moral evil ever terminates in positive evil, it can be demonstrated, that it often terminates in positive good. Now, if we know not a single case in which moral evil terminates in positive evil, it is most fallacious to argue, that it may nevertheless have this termination, because there are some instances of moral evil, the beneficial tendency of which we cannot at present perceive; but, if we do know many cases in which moral evil terminates in positive good, it is reasonable and just to argue, that it may be thus productive of ultimate good, even in those very cases, the beneficial tendency of which we cannot at present trace.

That a state in which there is a mixture of physical and moral evil, in which man is exposed to danger and temptation, in which he has much to fear and much to hope, in which he may render himself extremely miserable or extremely happy, according to the rectitude or disorder of his conduct—in a word, that a state of discipline, such as all believe the present to be, is admirably adapted to develope and to strengthen his faculties, and to form and improve his virtues, is universally admitted. But all the developement and strength of his faculties, all the formation and improvement of his virtues, consequent to such a state, wholly depend on the prevalence of physical and moral evil. The constantly returning wants to which his nature is incident, the inadequacy and precariousness of the provision which is made to supply them, the absolute necessity he is under, from the danger of perishing by cold and hunger, to exert himself to render that provision more abundant and certain, afford the stimulus by which he is incited to cultivate the earth, and gradually to improve his condition, till, from that of a naked and houseless savage, he has surrounded himself with all the conveniences and comforts of civilized life.

Thus it is obvious, that physical evil is not only conducive to the improvement of the natural condition of man, but that it is in reality the very source to which he is indebted for the creation of all those conveniences and comforts which so eminently promote his happiness, and for the inestimable advantages which have resulted from the exercise of his faculties, in the cultivation of the various arts on which the fabrication of those conveniences and com-

forts depend. Nor is the tendency of moral evil to extend and improve his moral attainments less certain and direct. The most exalted virtues which can adorn human nature are not only promoted by, but could not possibly exist without, the prevalence of moral evil. If there were no contumely and injustice, there could be no forbearance; if men never violated the rights of men, nor neglected their mutual duties, there could be no forgiveness; if there were no tendency in human nature to pride, there could be no virtue in humility; if there were no wants, nor weaknesses, nor sorrows, and no dependence of men on each other, there could be no charity, no sympathy, no compassion, no generous forgetfulness of his own to minister to another's necessities; if there were no temptation, there could be no joy, no glory from successful resistence, and, if no danger, no fortitude and no victory.

In whatever shape or measure evil may assail the virtuous, it is universally admitted, that to them at least it is but another form of good. Whether he be placed under the discipline of physical or of moral evil, or of both, to the good man, according to the emphatic language of scripture, all will work together for good. When the psalmist says, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted,' he records that experience of the moral benefit of adversity, to the truth of which, wise and reflective men, in all ages and all climes, have born testimony—to the truth of which, all men, however various the sources of their sorrow, and however different their modes of faith, without a single dissentient voice, still bear testimony. Nor can it be said, that it is to the virtuous only, that adversity is thus the minister of good; for adversity is frequently the means by which the vicious are made virtuous. The position, therefore, that evil, both physical and moral, under the government of the Deity, is the means of producing ultimate good, appears to be established on evidence as indubitable and complete as any subject of human belief.

This reasoning, it is obvious, is not adduced to prove that the punishment inflicted on the wicked in a future state will be corrective, and ultimately restore them to purity and happiness. The precise point which the preceding arguments are intended to establish, is, that evil, both physical and moral, is the means of producing ultimate good. One single case in which physical good is clearly and certainly produced by physical evil—one single case in which moral good is clearly and certainly produced by moral evil, is sufficient to establish this position—especially since, as has been shown, it is utterly impossible to prove the contrary; that is, since no instance can be pointed out in all nature, and no example in all the records of human experience, which renders it certain, or even probable, that physical or moral evil is absolutely and ultimately evil.

From the position, then, that God is the author of that constitution of things in which physical and moral evil originates, that there are cases in nature, and instances in human experience, in which good indubitably results from evil, and especially that the influence of adversity, in the formation and improvement of human virtue, is oftentimes extremely great—from these positions, it does not *directly* follow, that all mankind will ultimately be made pure and happy; but it does *directly* follow, that evil is the means of producing ultimate good.

It does not seem possible to resist the force of this reasoning in any other way than by denying the position on which it is founded, namely, that God is the author of evil, and by ascribing the benefit which all admit sometimes results from evil, not to the natural operation of evil, but to God's counteracting and overruling it for good.

With regard to the position, that God is not the author of evil, conscious as every human being must be, of the inadequacy of his faculties to comprehend fully the origin of evil, it becomes him to speak on the subject with profound humility. But surely it is not presumption to endeavour to form a clear, while it is confessed that in the present state it is not possible to form an adequate, conception of it. In tracing back the origin of evil, then, unless the mind be paralyzed by false fear, the offspring of false system, and unless the doctrine of Manicheeism be revived, it should seem no more possible to stop till we have arrived at the appointment of the Deity, than, in tracing back the series of second causes, it is possible to stop till we have arrived at the great First Cause of all things.

The argument, that the First Cause must be himself uncaused, because an infinite number of dependent beings requires a first and independent cause, as much as any one in the series, appears to be clear and irresistible;—equally clear and irresistible is the argument, that the same Being is the author of evil, because he is the author of the constitution of nature, both physical and moral, and because he appointed all the circumstances, the operation of which he foreknew would certainly involve the existence of evil.

It deserves, too, to be well considered, that the hypothesis, that evil is the appointment of the Deity, for the promotion of greater ultimate good, is adequate to remove every difficulty; while the doctrine, that he partially counteracts its operation, is extremely imperfect. Of physical evil, it surely cannot be said that God has no other relation to it than that of benevolent counteraction. Physical evil is as strictly dependent on the operation of the laws of nature, as any physical phenomena whatever. The structure of the bodies of animals, by which they are subject to disease and suffering—certain constitutions of the air, which at one time directly impair or destroy animal life, and at another blast the fruits of the earth, by which life is supported—earthquakes, pestilence, and the calamities incident to them—the evil which arises in all these cases is as strictly dependent on the operation of the laws of nature, as the gravitation of bodies to the earth. To him who appointed these laws,

this evil must necessarily be referred; and it is obviously insufficient to say, of any benefit which may result from their operation, that it is the consequence only of his benevolent counteraction.

In like manner, the suffering connected with moral disorder as necessarily results from the constitution of the moral nature of man, as physical evil results from the constitution of nature. That man must be rendered unhappy by every deviation from rectitude, is as much the consequence of a law of his nature, as the due nourishment of his body by the reception of nutritious food. That inestimable advantages result from this moral constitution, is universally admitted; and it is obviously insufficient to say of these, that they are the consequence merely of God's counteracting and overruling evil; for surely there can be no more certain evidence, that God has appointed or ordained a thing, than that he has made it the invariable result of a general law.

In a word, the brief, but full answer to the hypothesis we are considering, is, that, if God benevolently counteract evil, he makes it the instrument of good. The imagination cannot conceive of his counteracting evil in any other way than by his making it the instrument of producing greater ultimate good. Upon this very hypothesis, therefore, it must be admitted, that evil is sometimes at least the instrument of producing ultimate good. The essential difference between God's benevolent counteraction of evil and his benevolent causation of it, is, that, according to the former hypothesis, the beneficial effect of his interference is partial and imperfect; according to the latter, it is universal and complete.

Upon the whole, it is perfectly evident, that neither the nature nor the government of the Deity can be benevolent, unless evil be, in every instance and every measure in which it prevails, through the vast system which he at first constituted, and which he constantly superintends, not an end, but the means to some further end, namely, that of promoting ultimate good—good, higher, in nature, and greater in degree, than could have been produced without it.

Many attempts have been made to reconcile the existence of natural and moral evil with infinite wisdom and goodness, on the principle, that, by the operation of evil, the sum of happiness produced to mankind collectively is greater than the sum of misery. It has even been conceived, that this may be the case, though by far the greater number of mankind, after having been exposed to sin and misery on earth, not only fail to obtain happiness in a future state, but suffer excruciating and unceasing torment through all the ages of eternity. How the few who escape this tremendous and general ruin can, by any measure or duration of felicity, cause the collective sum of happiness to exceed that of a misery which must ever be as lasting and more general than itself, it seems impossible to conceive. It is believed that those who die in unrepented sin will be as greatly wretched as the penitent and pious will be greatly happy—that the disproportion in their number will ever be at least as great as it is at present, and the disproportion in their destiny infinitely greater; how, then, upon the supposition of unmitigated, unmixed, and everlasting misery, is it possible, that the evil which has produced this misery can be the means of increasing the collective sum of happiness?

It is only necessary to bring the mind to the steady and distinct conception of what is really supposed in a misery which involves the great majority of mankind, and which is at once as great as can be endured, and as lasting as eternity, to perceive that its existence is impossible, unless the author of the system in which it prevails be cruel and malignant in the highest degree. That myriads and myriads of human beings, constituting a number so vast, that the imagination can form no adequate conception of it, should be doomed to inexpressible torment, and that this tremendous mass of *never-ending* misery should be adopted by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, as the means of producing a greater collective sum of happiness to his creatures, is an hypothesis which the heart, were it permitted to indulge its genuine feeling, must execrate, and the understanding, did not system prostrate it in the dust, reject with indignation.

There is in this hypothesis a difficulty which ought never to be lost sight of. It supposes the great majority of mankind to be sacrificed (and O, how sacrificed!) to comparatively a few; while, to the great majority thus sacrificed, in no period of their being, in no manner, in no measure, is any compensation afforded. In no other part of the great system with which we are acquainted, is there any thing like this! In the whole economy of nature, there is nothing bearing the slightest analogy to it!

The wisdom and goodness of the Deity, in the permission of natural and moral evil, may be perfectly vindicated, and can be perfectly vindicated, only on the supposition, that, considered in relation to the entire period of his being, *it increases the sum of happiness to every individual.* And that this will be the ultimate issue of evil, is confirmed by every thing which reason and experience teach concerning its nature and tendency, and is opposed by nothing but the prejudices of a system which leads to consequences truly horrible, and which is supported by no appearance in nature, by no testimony of experience, and by no induction of reason.

If it be said that this is assuming more than is absolutely necessary, to vindicate the divine perfections, it must at least be granted, that the lowest ground it is possible to assume, is, that, how much soever evil may prevail, every individual will nevertheless experience, the whole period of his being considered, more happiness than misery. If this position be denied, no ingenuity can reconcile the prevalence of evil with the government of infinite wisdom and goodness. If it be granted, the doctrine of endless misery must be aban-

doned at once, and the mind must ultimately rest, (as will be largely shown hereafter,) in the conclusion, that evil is designed to be, and actually is, the means of increasing the ultimate sum of happiness to every individual.

If it be objected, that, according to this view of evil, the Deity has himself violated the command which he has given to his creatures, and has done evil in order that good may come, it is replied, that the consequence may be readily admitted, and that the principle which justifies the divine procedure is obvious. To allow to such a being as man the liberty of doing evil with a good design, would be fatal, because he cannot *certainly* foresee the effect of his conduct, nor control events in such a manner as to *secure* his purpose. But God, being possessed of perfect knowledge and almighty power, must be acquainted with the result of all possible combinations of circumstances, and must be able to secure it against all miscarriage. It may therefore be supremely benevolent in him, to do what it would be ruinous in man to attempt.

From the whole of what has been said, then, it appears that we may, without presumption, with the full concurrence of reason, and on the clear warrant of scripture, affirm, that, when the Deity placed man in such circumstances as he foresaw would be attended with the production and indulgence of evil passions, he at the same time perceived, that under his direction these passions would produce, *to mankind collestively, and to every individual particularly*, a greater sum of happiness than could have existed without them. That the evil which results from the indulgence of the bad passions of mankind *may* be made the means of eradicating them, and of training the mind to purity and benevolence, we have, as has been fully shown, unquestionable proof in the daily events of life. This, then, which we see to be their effect, with regard to some individuals at present, it is contended, will be their ultimate effect with respect to all mankind—that this is the final cause of their existence, and THAT THE GREAT DESIGN OF THE DEITY IS TO BRING ALL HIS INTELLIGENT OFFSPRING TO A STATE OF PURITY AND HAPPINESS.

This doctrine reconciles every difficulty, and throws a glorious and cheering light on all the dispensations of the Deity. If it be true, every thing was planned by benevolence, every thing is guided by benevolence, every thing will terminate in benevolence, in eternal and ever-increasing felicity to all.

This doctrine, which represents the character of the Universal Parent in the most glorious and affecting light, and is benevolent in its tendency beyond any other opinion whatever, has been opposed with much violence by some of the best of men, and the worst have as loudly exclaimed against it. The prejudices of the good and the bad, of the pious and the profane, equally oppose it; yet there is no other truth which seems to be supported by so many *different* appearances, or by evidence derived from so many different sources. And, since it throws so much light on the character and dispensations of the Deity, and is replete with such solid consolation, it may be useful to examine it somewhat at length—first considering some of the arguments which appear to favour it, and next the objections which are usually brought to oppose it.

Because this doctrine maintains that mankind will finally be restored from sin, and from the present and future misery which is its consequence, to a state of purity and happiness, and that this will ultimately be the case with respect to every individual of the human race, it is sometimes termed the doctrine of UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, which phrase, merely for the sake of brevity, we may hereafter frequently employ.

Some dispute, however, has arisen respecting the nature of the evidence which alone can establish this doctrine. It will be vain to proceed, therefore, before the principles are settled, upon which it will be proper to conduct the investigation. The nature of the evidence, which will be deemed legitimate and satisfactory, must be determined before it will avail to adduce any.

PART SECOND.

INTRODUCTION.

OF THE KIND OF EVIDENCE WHICH IS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINE OF THE ULTIMATE PURITY AND HAPPINESS OF ALL MANKIND.

Some persons maintain that the only evidence which can establish the doctrine of Universal Restoration is the *direct* testimony of scripture. They seem to think that every proof, however solid in itself, if it cannot be adduced in the very words, or at least if it be not borne out by the express testimony of revelation, is insufficient.

Others contend, that there is nothing in this doctrine which can prevent the application of such principles or modes of reasoning to it, as are universally deemed just and satisfactory when applied to other subjects—that, if there be any doctrine of religion, of which we can obtain a well-founded assurance, by considerations which do not derive their force from the express declarations of scripture, or which are altogether independent of it, there can be no reason why the doctrine of Universal Restoration may not be one of these, and that, if this opinion can be established upon a just and solid principle, it is sufficient, whether that principle be derived from revelation, or from any other source.

If the first of these classes will be content to say, 'No evidence will be sufficient to establish this opinion, unless it harmonize with scripture,' there will remain no difference whatever between them; and surely it is absurd to endeavour to establish a distinction where there ought to be the greatest union. Every principle, from whatever source it be derived, if it be just, must harmonize with scripture, and all scripture, if it be genuine, and rightly understood, must harmonize with every just principle.

Evidence founded upon a just principle is satisfactory, from whatever source it be derived; the only question which can affect the solidity of the conviction it produces, is whether it be just, not whether it have this or that origin. One single solid argument in favour of the doctrine of Universal Restoration, deduced from the perfections of God, for example, is sufficient to establish its truth. One single solid argument deduced from scripture is likewise sufficient; but, if a solid argument can be derived from both, the conviction produced will be more complete. In a word, if this doctrine be true, it can be established both by reason and by revelation; if it be false, it can be refuted by both.

It is for this reason, that the evidence of both will be adduced in the following pages. The testimony of reason adds an unspeakable value to the declarations of scripture—not because established scripture wants the assistance of man's reason, but because, if a doctrine be contrary to reason, we know that it is not the word of God. It betrays an ignorance of the nature of both, to pay no regard to a clear deduction of reason because it is not revelation, or to maintain that what is contrary to reason is revealed in scripture; for truth cannot be inconsistent with reason, nor can scripture and truth clash.

In adducing the evidence in favour of the doctrine of the ultimate restoration of all mankind to purity and happiness, it may be proper to begin with the statement of that which is derived from considerations which have no direct reference to the *positive* declarations of scripture—then to examine the objections which are urged against it, whether derived from scripture or from other sources, and, in the last place, to state those express declarations of scripture which appear to establish it.

If it can be shown, that all the perfections of the Deity, that the nature of man, and the nature and design of punishment, are completely in favour of this doctrine, that the objections which have been urged against it, whether derived from reason or revelation, may be satisfactorily removed, that the arguments which have been supposed to establish contrary opinions are not conclusive, and that the scriptures contain some passages which can have no meaning unless this doctrine be supposed, others which cannot be true unless it be admitted, and others which seem directly and positively to favour it—this would seem sufficient to convince a candid inquirer of its truth; because, in this case, the evidence in its favour will not only be direct and positive, but will be founded also on the most firm and solid principles, and there will be no evidence against it. It will be the object of the following pages to establish, in order, each of the above positions.

It may be proper, however, to observe, that arguments may in reality be derived from scripture, which do not at first sight appear to be so. Revelation has poured so much light upon the mind, and has led us into such a just way of reasoning, concerning God, concerning his design in creation, and his government of the world, that our conceptions and arguments, even when they do not appear at all to depend upon this heavenly guide, attain a degree of sublimity and truth, to which they would never have arrived without it; and we often appear to be following the deductions of our own understanding, when in reality we are only repeating in other words, and with other asso-

ciations, the declarations of scripture. Why, without any direct or apparent dependence upon revelation, are we now able to form such pure and exalted conceptions of the Supreme Being, as were totally unknown to the great sages of antiquity? It is because revelation has furnished us with the light which has conducted us to these noble and just conclusions. Of our views of the perfections of the Deity, of his dispensations to his creatures, of his works and of his ways—in a word, of all the principles upon which the subsequent reasoning is founded, this observation is peculiarly true. Although, therefore, the arguments contained in the second part of this work may not appear, at first sight, to be founded upon the scriptures, it is not just to conclude that they have a different origin; for, *in so far as they are true*, they must be, either directly or indirectly, derived from it, since there is no reason to believe that they could have been formed by any mind which had not been illumined by this divine light.

The evidence in favour of the doctrine of Universal Restoration, distinct from that afforded by the express declarations of scripture, may be arranged under three heads, namely: that which is deducible from the perfections of God, from the nature of man, and from the nature and design of punishment.

It is proper to say, that the arguments adduced under each of these particulars are distinct from those afforded by the express declarations of scripture; because, how much soever they may really depend upon the light of revelation, (and for the reason already assigned they may depend upon it in a very great degree,) yet they are framed without any direct reference to it, and seem in general to be derived from the nature of things. Reasoning of this kind is peculiarly satisfactory; and, if the *positive* declarations of scripture can be shown to coincide with it, to include it, and to be founded upon it, it must produce a conviction as strong as can be effected by any thing which is not an object of sense, or which cannot be proved upon the principles of geometry.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, DERIVED FROM THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

SECTION I.

Of the Goodness of God.

Were it assumed, that he who gave us existence, and bestowed upon us all things richly to enjoy, is a Being of infinite goodness, it would be only taking for granted what all Christians, and even all theists, allow. It may be proper, however, to state briefly the evidence of the perfect benignity of the Universal Parent.

Because the phenomena of nature cannot be accounted for without the supposition of a self-existent Being, the original cause of all things, we conclude that such a Being exists, and that, since he is the cause of all other things and beings, he must be independent of them. Because he who could create such a world as this, must be able to do any thing which is not in itself a contradiction, we infer that his power is without limits. Because the exhibitions of wisdom, in every part of nature with which we are acquainted, surpass all assignable limits, and because we cannot but conceive, that the intelligence which is displayed in the constitution of the world is adequate to the performance of any thing which is in its own nature possible, we conclude also, that his wisdom is infinite. From these principles, his goodness follows as a necessary consequence.

For the Original Cause of all things, being absolutely independent, being infinite in power and wisdom, must be good, since evil is the result of want, weakness, or error. But he who is infinite in power can have no want; neither can he have any weakness; and he who created all things, and gave them the relations they possess, cannot but know them perfectly, and therefore must be incapable of error.

That evil can arise from no other sources than those which have been mentioned, will appear evident from considering the origin of any form of it with which we are acquainted. Whence, for example, arise envy, malice, hatred, injustice? Envy is the malicious coveting of a good possessed by another; something is desired which cannot be attained.—He, then, who has it in his power to obtain all good, must be incapable of envy. Injustice is the withholding of a good, real or supposed, from another whose right it is; he who has it in his power to obtain all good, must therefore be incapable of injustice. And the same may be said of every description of moral evil whatever.

If an intelligent being perceive perfectly the true relation of all things to each other, so as to be incapable of mistake, and if at the same time he have the whole of possibility in his power, he must, in the nature of things, be incapable of evil; because he cannot commit evil through ignorance, and there can be nothing to induce him to act with an evil design. This, then, is exactly the idea which we form of the Supreme Intelligence.

If this deduction of the goodness of God, from the other essential attributes of his nature, be just, it will be confirmed by the appearances of his works. What he has done will satisfy us that we are right in our conception of what he is.

In endeavouring to ascertain from his works, whether or not the Deity be benevolent, we must conduct our investigation in the same manner as when we endeavour to discover his other perfections; because, in the objects around us, we perceive so many marks of design, such various and exquisite contrivance, we conclude that their Author is intelligent. In like manner, if it appear that this design is a good design, that this contrivance ministers

not only to convenience, but to enjoyment, it will follow that its Author is good.

Now there are two facts, of the certainty of which no one who examines the state of the animal creation can doubt, which place the goodness of the Creator beyond all question. The first is, that pleasure is imparted to animal sensations, when no cause can be assigned for it but the gratification of the animal; the second is that there is more happiness than misery in the world.*

The first, if it can be clearly proved, affords a conviction, the certainty of which cannot be exceeded by any kind of evidence whatever —not even by that which we derive from geometry or from sense. The determination to create an animal supposes a determination to endow it with all the faculties which are necessary to its existence. These faculties, therefore, however multiplied, beautiful or exquisite, cannot prove the goodness of the Creator; because, being necessary to the existence of the animal, they must have formed a part of any design to create, whether good or malevolent. But if these faculties be so constituted, that they not only give existence, but make that existence happy—if in general they cannot be exercised without affording enjoyment as well as life, then there is not only design, but good design. Then it is evident, that the Creator not only meant to give existence, but to make that existence a blessing.

With all the animal functions, then, this is the case. They all minister to enjoyment, while they sustain the mysterious principle of life. There is not a single exception.— There is not one animal function, the common and natural exercise of which is painful. There is not one whose natural exercise is not productive of pleasure.† Whence could this possibly happen but from the goodness of the Creator?

He who is infinite in power might have so constituted an animal, as to make the exercise of every function which is necessary to its existence productive of exquisite suffering; and had his nature been malignant, and his design in creation been to gratify a malignant disposition, he would certainly have done so. Constituted as animals at present are, it is necessary to the continuance of their life, that they should eat. The act of eating might have been made productive of exquisite misery, and the animal have been infallibly impelled to it, by making the pain of hunger still greater than that of eating. Here, then, was an opportunity of diffusing over the whole animal creation a source of continual torment. But, instead of this, the act is made pleasurable, and thus becomes the source of continual gratification.— How can this be accounted for, but upon the supposition, that he who had the diffusion of both equally in his power, and who chose to diffuse happiness rather than misery, is good?

Constituted as animals at present are, and placed amidst such objects as those which surround them, it was necessary that they should have the senses of sight and of touch. Now the eye might have been so constructed, as to receive from every object the same kind of impression as is felt when it is cast upon any thing that is monstrous. The sense of touch might have been so formed, as to impart, upon the contact of every object, a sensation similar to that which is felt when the surface of the body is pierced with thorns; and, as the body must always be in contact with some external object, this torment might have been experienced during every moment of existence. Why, then, is this not the case?— Why, on the contrary, do we continually receive the most exquisite gratification from all our senses? It can be resolved into nothing but the pure benignity of the Creator.

This annexation of pleasure to the exercise of animal functions, when that pleasure is not at all necessary to animal existence, is a decisive proof of the goodness of the Deity; for it is to produce happiness without doing any thing else; it is to rest in it as an ultimate object; it is to do this in proportion as happiness prevails beyond what is necessary to life —that is, in proportion as it prevails at all.— But to produce happiness for its own sake, to rest in it as an ultimate object, is of the very essence of benevolence, and pure and perfect benevolence can do no more. Neither can such a provision for enjoyment possibly arise from any thing but benevolence; for an evil nature must necessarily be incapable of it.— In proportion, then, as happiness is diffused over the creation of God, is the plenitude of the proof that he is good.

The force of this reasoning will appear to increase in proportion as the faculties of an animal are exalted, because the extension of the capacity of enjoyment affords a greater opportunity for the display of that goodness which provides for its full and constant supply. Thus man, endowed with higher faculties than those which characterize mere animal existence, is capable of higher happiness. To him, in addition to the pleasures of sense, for the enjoyment of which he is fitted by the constitution of his nature, no less than other animals, are afforded the nobler gratifications which arise from the exercise of his intellectual faculties. These faculties are given him as the means of improving his condition.— Continual exertion is indispensable to their developement; and so admirably is the structure of society adapted to their nature, that no one can exist in it without exerting them. Either to procure the means of comfortable subsistence in the rank in which he is placed, or to raise himself to a higher station, or to obtain that measure of knowledge, and that degree of general cultivation, which the progress of society has rendered indispensable to his condition, every one finds himself compel-

*Each of these positions has been stated and illustrated, with admirable force and beauty, by Paley, in his Natural Theology.

†Indeed, the very application of the term natural is a decisive proof of the goodness of the Deity. When the functions of an animal are so exercised, as to afford it vigour, ease, and enjoyment, we say it is in a natural state.

led to the continual exertion of his faculties. By the operation of the same causes, arts are cultivated, manufactures flourish, commerce is extended, science facilitates the movements of the vast and complicated machine which is set in motion, and literature unfolds the treasures which reward the culture of its ample regions. To society, the advantage of this constant activity is incalculable, and it is of inestimable utility to the individual. In these pursuits, his highest powers are called forth and invigorated, and his purest and noblest pleasures experienced. Yet the intellectual faculties are never exerted for the sake of the pleasure they afford. Pleasure is the unthought of, but the invariable consequence of their exercise. Distinction, fame, wealth, are the objects for which they are exerted; pleasure is the unsought, the incidental, yet the almost constant result of their exertion.—This pleasure, therefore, is as purely a gift of the Creator, as that which arises from the gratification of the senses, and proves as decisively his benevolence. It is pleasure gratuitously added to the exercise of faculties which might be as perfectly exerted without it as with it; it affords a beautiful example of pleasure rested in as an ultimate object.

This pleasure, which is connected with the exercise of a cultivated understanding, is of constant occurrence; it is pure and unalloyed; it increases with the improvement of art and the knowledge of nature, and has no other limit than the perfection of the one, and the boundary of the other. He whose perceptions are refined by cultivation, is as if he were endowed with new senses, and he walks continually forth into a world of being and of beauty, to which other men are strangers.—Every thing is to him the minister of improvement or of gratification. The sun, the earth, the ocean, the mountain's towering height, the green and golden vale, stretching far out below its 'mantle gay,'

> And every odorous plant and brighter thing,
> Born of the sunny skies and weeping rain,
> That, from the bosom of the Spring,
> Starts into life and beauty once again—

every object that strikes the sense, or that awakens fancy, raises in such a mind trains of ideas the most soothing, the most elevating and the most delightful. And yet, that a pile of ruins, 'some abbey's mouldering towers'—that the productions of art, or the discoveries of science—that painting, music, poetry, eloquence, philosophy, should excite or recall pleasurable emotions, is no more a necessary consequence of the exertion of the mental faculties, than that a beautiful colour or a harmonious sound should agreeably affect its appropriate sense. Pleasure is gratuitously superadded by the abounding goodness of the Creator. And when the pure nature of that pleasure is considered, the abundance of the objects, and the frequency of the occasions which excite it, together with its wonderful tendency to expand the mind, and thereby to enlarge the capacity it supplies, it is surely impossible not to admire and adore the goodness which, in thus constituting the human faculties, has made such ample and unfailing provision for human enjoyment.

The second fact upon which the benevolence of the Deity is founded, is, that there is more happiness than misery through the whole of the animal creation. Were it not so, we should see all animals tired of life, and eager to throw off the burden of existence. But the reverse is the fact. What exertions do they not all make to prolong their being! How are all their faculties continually upon the stretch to preserve themselves from danger! How various, how wonderful are their resources!—How tenaciously do they cling to existence, even to its latest moment!

What a scene of enjoyment does the tribe of insects, of fishes, of all the inferior animals exhibit, from the beginning to the end of life! Those whose confirmation fits them for motion, how delighted are they to run, to fly, to leap, to swim! How incessantly are they gliding from place to place, without any apparent object, deriving gratification from the mere exercise of their limbs! Those which delight in rest, how happy are they in the loneliness of the shade—in basking in the sun, or grazing in the field! In a summer evening, how exhilarating is it to the spirits, to leave for a while the busy hum of men, and wander beneath the clear blue sky, and amidst Nature's own works! What millions of happy creatures every where surround us! Above, around, beneath—every thing is in motion, and every thing is happy. The air, the earth, the water, every tree, and every shrub, and every little blade of grass teems with delighted existence. Scarcely can we fix the eye upon a single spot in which there is not life and happiness! Which of the millions of creatures that press upon our sight is in pain? Which of them does not by every movement declare, that, to the full measure of its capacity, it is happy?

This felicity seems to belong to, and to characterize animal life, during the whole period of its existence. It is exempt from almost all the sources of infelicity which impair the happiness of man, and fill him with gloom and sorrow. It is not subject to much disease, and that which accident or natural decay does induce, is of short continuance. It spends the measure of its days in sportiveness and pleasure, and when its last moment comes, it arrives without giving any previous indication of its approach, and all consciousness ceases suddenly, and with little pain.

Now, when we consider the extent and the *fulness* of creation—when we remember that it is scarcely possible, as has just been observed, to fix the eye upon the minutest spot, where there is not life—when, under this impression, we endeavour to calculate how many creatures there sometimes are upon one single leaf—upon all the leaves on one tree—how many, therefore, in one field—how many in all the fields which the eye can take in at a single glance—how many in all the fields in one

country—when we remember that each of these creatures is in a state of positive happiness, and then endeavour to calculate the collective sum of enjoyment in one country—can we help exclaiming, What an effort of benevolence was creation! Can we doubt the goodness of its Author?

Even among men, there is in reality much less misery than is commonly imagined. Many persons can recount every period of their life in which they were unhappy; others can scarcely mention a single misfortune which ever befel them; and those on whom the afflictive dispensations of Heaven have fallen more heavily, how distinctly are these days of visitation marked in their memory! But can they recount with equal facility their days of happiness? Can they number up, not their moments or their hours, but even their weeks and their months of enjoyment? They have forgotten the periods of their happiness; they remember those only in which they were miserable. The reason is obvious. The one is a common occurrence, the usual and ordinary state of things—the other is a singular event. It happened only at distant intervals, was quite out of the general course, and therefore the mind distinctly marked, and the memory retains it. We notice an eclipse; we talk of it, but we do not so much observe the daily splendour of the sun. We may enjoy its light and heat many months without thinking of it, and the reason is the same in both cases. We observe what is unusual, but that which is familiar makes no remarkable impression. This consideration alone is sufficient to convince us, that we enjoy infinitely more than we suffer.

But we are able to go much farther, and to affirm, that even in those periods, few as they are, in which we were unhappy, and which we have been accustomed to consider as distinguished by misery alone, we really suffered very little, compared with what we have been in the habit of believing. We are seized, let us suppose, with an acute disease. It attacks some vital organ, induces extreme debility, and threatens the speedy extinction of life. All this time, the bodily suffering inflicted is often slight. The most violent diseases—that is, those which most surely and suddenly destroy life—are by no means painful. Indeed, those which occasion great pain are remarkably few, and those which produce both severe and constant pain are still more rare. Yet, from the general mode of expression, and perhaps from the prevailing impression of the mind, it would seem as if much suffering were experienced from the commencement till the complete termination of a disease; but this is certainly not the case. In many diseases of a most afflictive nature, hour after hour passes away without any thing being felt which can justly be termed pain. Paroxysms of suffering sometimes occur, but it is seldom that they last long. Rest and ease speedily succeed; and indeed exacerbation implies remission. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that these intervals are often amongst the sweetest and most valued moments of existence—the preceding pain giving a keen and exquisite relish for enjoyment—while the thoughts with which the mind amuses itself in sickness, the hope of recovery, and the attentions of kind and tender friends, greatly lessen and counterbalance the actual sum of misery endured. Indeed, disease, taking the most extensive view of it, seems destructive to the life rather than to the enjoyment of the sentient being; and, in fact, the first is the final cause of disease; the second is only an accidental consequence.

These observations may be applied with equal justice to the afflictions of the mind. Whatever be the nature or magnitude of the calamity with which it is visited, it is never constantly, nor even for a long period together, under its influence. Whoever will consider the conduct of his mind under the severest misfortune, will soon be convinced of this fact. He will perceive that a thousand objects came in to attract his attention from the subject of his sorrow, of which he was unconscious at the time, and to which he yielded without knowing it—that the mind has numberless sources of pleasure, to which in its most gloomy hour, it soon spontaneously betakes itself, and that it is impossible to chain it down to perpetual afflictive thought. If he will carefully compare the number of minutes in which he is sure that his attention was fixed on the subject of his misfortune, with those in which he is satisfied that it was occupied with other objects, he will be so far from believing he contemplated it incessantly, that he will wonder he thought of it so little. At particular periods, indeed, he dwelt upon and felt all his wretchedness; these periods, perhaps, are distinctly marked in his memory, but he has forgotten the hours of abstraction from his sorrow which intervened, and for the same reason that he has forgotten so many of his peaceful days. Now the bestowment of this constitution of mind is of the very essence of benevolence. Language cannot express the kindness there is in it, nor are we at all able to estimate the relief we owe to it from the afflictions which befall us.

Thus, then, it appears that pleasure not only preponderates over pain, but that this is often the case even in the most unhappy periods of existence. And in the ordinary circumstances of life, how great is that pleasure! How various, how exquisite, how far surpassing our ability to esimate! Contemplate a person placed in the ordinary circumstances of life; suppose him addicted to no particular vice, nor practising any exemplary virtue—neither highly favoured with the gifts of understanding nor of fortune; of what pleasure is he capable, and what pleasure does he actually enjoy? What gratification does he every hour receive from his different senses—from the exercise of his intellectual faculties—from his social affections—from the relations which connect him with his fellow-beings, those relations so dear and sacred, which constitute him a father, a husband, a brother, a friend!

But suppose him not only addicted to no vice, but highly virtuous, to feel a deep sense of his obligations to the Supreme Being, to love him, to take a sincere pleasure in learning and obeying his laws, and in preparing to meet him in those blissful regions, where he will enjoy such superior displays of his perfections and glory; suppose him to consider all his fellow-creatures as brethren, to feel for them a real and fraternal affection, and to delight in doing them all the good offices in his power; in a word, suppose him to be a sincere disciple of Jesus Christ; what exquisite felicity does such a being enjoy! How sublime in its nature! How immortal in its duration!

How nearly does it assimilate him to the Supreme Being himself! Who can believe that such faculties and such happiness can be bounded by the current of time, or swept away amidst the low and frivolous objects which it is bearing to eternal oblivion—that they are imparted only to give dignity to the triumph of death, and importance to the spoil of the grave, and that the very benignity of their Author is questionable?

There is yet another circumstance in the constitution of our nature, which proves both the benevolence of the principle on which it is constructed, and the preponderance of happiness actually experienced, namely, the pleasure afforded by retrospection and anticipation. The fact, that the recollection of the places we have visited, the persons we have seen, the companions with whom we have associated, the occupations in which we have engaged, and the general train of events which have befallen us, and which constitute the little history of ourselves, is pleasurable, is seldom denied. And there are places, and persons, and periods—periods in some cases comprehending months and years which we can never think of without extreme delight. Hence the magic there is in the name of country, home, and friend, and hence the pleasure, perhaps the most exquisite the mind ever tastes, with which it dwells on some bright and blissful moments of existence, or on some spots with the recollection of the objects of which are inseparately associated its own thoughts and emotions. Recollection, it is true, does not in general afford this acute and exquisite pleasure, but in general it does afford pleasure.

But recollection is only the compound vestige of all the pleasures and pains which have been associated with the objects contemplated. If, therefore, recollection be upon the whole pleasurable, the balance must of necessity have been in favour of pleasure.

And the feeling with which we look forward to the future is for the most part not only pleasurable, but exhilerating. Hope is the balm of life. As many pains which once produced considerable suffering are softened, and even converted into actual pleasures, so the fear which occasionally mingles with hope is seldom sufficient to deprive it of its charm. But in fact we live in the past and in the future. The pleasures and pains produced by present circumstances have very inconsiderable influence on present feeling; that feeling depends almost entirely on recollection and anticipation, and these faculties are made the sources of pleasure. There is nothing in the structure of the bodily frame more indicative of wisdom, than this mental constitution is demonstrative of goodness.

The constitution of our social nature, also, is such as to ensure the continual augmentation of happiness. We are made mutually dependent. It is an essential part of the plan of the Deity, that the highest happiness enjoyed by man should be communicated by man. But the happiness one person receives from another endears to him the author of his pleasure, and makes him wish to show to his benefactor the like kindness. If, on the other hand, a person be the occasion of misery to another, this not only checks any expressions of kindness, but puts the injured on thinking how he can prevent a repetition of the injury, and, by the infliction of positive pain, make the evildoer feel that he cannot invade another's happiness without losing his own. Thus in a twofold manner self-love is rendered the instrument of increasing happiness. The operation of this principle must therefore be to augment benevolence without limits, to check malevolence in its origin, and ultimately to destroy it. It is not possible to conceive a more satisfactory evidence of the provision which the creator has made, in the very frame of our nature, for our happiness. But it does more than this. It proves, in the clearest manner, the infinite benevolence of the Creator himself; for it renders benevolence inseparable from knowledge—it shows that benevolence must arise in all beings in proportion to their experience of good and evil, and their acquaintance with causes and effects. Hence it has been most justly argued, that benevolence arises as necessarily in an intelligent nature, as self-love does in a sensitive nature—that moral distinctions are founded in truth—that every being who perceives truth must perceive them—that the Deity, therefore, who perceives all truth, must perceive them in all their extent and obligation, and be more under their influence than any other being. But the chief of all moral distinctions is, that it is right to communicate happiness, and wrong to produce misery. This distinction, God, as intelligent, must perceive, and the perception of it is the same with the approbation of beneficence, and the disapprobation of its contrary. A stronger argument cannot exist. It shows that the principle of benevolence in the Deity is implied in his perception of the truth, and that it is just as certain that he is good, as it is that we say right when we say that happiness is better than misery. The nature of happiness is better than misery. The nature of happiness and misery being such, that a preference of one of them to the other must arise in every mind, in proportion to the degree in which they are known, it follows, with the plainest evidence, that the Supreme Intelligence must be original and supreme beneve-

lence, or such a benevolence as nothing can turn aside, or deceive, or counteract.

In a word, the Creator must either be benevolent or malevolent. Suppose him to be malevolent; suppose his design in creation to have been to produce misery; in this case, evil would have been the aim of nature in all its appointments, and good would have been, as evil is now, always the consequence, either of some regulation for producing general misery, or of some unnatural violence and perversion. All design in the frame of nature would have been cruel design, and all that wisdom of God, in his works, which we now admire and adore, we should have dreaded as a contrivance to extend distress, and cursed as an expedient to render pain more pungent and permanent. The *ordinary* state of every being would have been, not a state of ease and enjoyment, but of trouble and anguish. 'The lower animals, and all inanimate nature, instead of being made to minister to our delight and accommodation, would have been made to annoy and harass us. The bee would have been without his honey, and the rose without its fragrance. The fields would have wanted their cheerful green and gay flowers. The fire would have scorched without warming us. The light of day would have dazzled without cheering us. Every breath of air would have cut us like the point of a sword. The appetites and senses would have been the instruments of torture, and never of pleasure to us, except when turned out of their common course by incidental causes. Every touch would have felt like the rubbing of a wound. Every taste would have been a bitter, and every sound a scream. Our imaginations would have presented nothing but frightful spectres to us. Our thoughts would have been the seat of a deep and constant melancholy, and our reason would have served only to show us our wretchedness. What we now call gratification would have been nothing but a relaxation of torment, and we should have been driven to the offices necessary for self-preservation, by an increase of sufferings occasioned by neglecting them. Or, if at any time any feelings of delight were granted us, they would have been, as the paroxysms of pain are at present, transient and rare, and intended only to set a keener edge on misery, by giving a taste of its contrary.

'In the present state of the world, our pains, when they become extreme, soon make an end of either themselves or us. But, in the state of things we are imagining, there could have been no such merciful appointment; for our bodies, probably, would have been so made as to be capable of bearing the severest pains, and at the same time we might have been deterred from self-violence, by knowing that the consequence of hastening death would be getting sooner into a state of misery still more dreadful, and which would never come to an end.' *

It is impossible to contrast our actual condition with that which is here imagined, without a deep and joyful feeling, that he who gave us life, and all things richly to enjoy, is a Being of infinite benevolence.

But, if he be really so, whence is misery? He is almighty, and therefore he can have been controlled by no superior power. He is absolute wisdom; to him are known the true natures of all things; he must therefore be perfectly benevolent. And because he is pure reason, he can have no tendencies opposed to benevolence; for reason cannot be the ground of approbation of beneficence, and at the same time of biases inconsistent with it. Whence, then, is evil? It is impossible, even while contemplating the most satisfactory evidence of the divine goodness, not to ask this question. To have a clear and just conception of the answer to it, is to be happy under almost all the events of life and secure and resigned under its worst ills; and, though the true answer to it may be collected from what has been already advanced, yet this subject is of such unspeakable importance, that it demands a more particular consideration.

SECTION II.

Of the Evil of Defect, and of Natural and Moral Evil.

The origin of evil has occupied the attention of the most profound and pious minds, from the earliest periods of which we have any record, and the investigation of it still continues to exercise the highest faculties of the most intelligent and enlightened men.—It must be confessed that we do not comprehend it. Perhaps our present faculties are not capacious enough to take in that vast extent, and that various kind of knowledge, which are necessary to a full understanding of the subject. It is at least certain that we do not possess this knowledge, and probable that we shall never attain to it in the present state.—Much, however, is known—sufficient to remove all reasonable doubt and apprehension, and to afford peace to the mind.

That this difficulty was perceived by the ancient philosophers, and by the primitive believers and defenders of the Christian religion, is certain, for it is stated by them in its full force. The supposed Maker of the world, it was long ago said, was either willing to abolish all evils, but not able, or was able and not willing, or he was neither willing nor able, or, lastly, he was both able and willing.—This latter is the only thing that answers fully to the notion of a God. Now, that the supposed Creator of all things was not thus both able and willing to abolish all evils, is plain, because then there would have been no evils at all left. Wherefore, since there is such a deluge of evils overflowing all, it must needs be that either he was willing and not able to remove them, and then he was *impotent*, or else he was able and not willing, and then he was envious, or, lastly, he was neither able nor willing, and then he was both impotent and envious.

If, it was argued, there be but one Author

* Dr. Price's Sermon, p. 283.

of all things, the origin of all evil must be referred to him. But how can infinite goodness become the origin of evil? If God could not hinder it, he is not powerful; if he could and would not, he is not good. If it be said that evil necessarily adheres to some particular natures, since these too must owe their being to God, it would surely have been better not to have given them existence, than to have debased his workmanship with these concomitant evils.

A full and complete answer to these objections it is not in the power of the human faculties, with their present knowledge, perhaps with their present means of knowledge, to give; but an answer, sufficient to produce in the considerate and candid mind an undoubting conviction of the perfect benevolence of the Creator, can be rendered.

All the kinds of evil of which we can conceive may be comprehended under three, namely, the evil of imperfection, natural and moral evil.

The evil of imperfection is the absence of perfection; natural evil is pain produced by natural causes; moral evil is pain produced by wrong volitions.

In regard to the evil of imperfection, it is impossible that it should have been avoided; it is the necessary property of created being. Omnipotence itself could not have removed it, because Omnipotence could not effect that which in the nature of things is impossible to be effected—could not produce a contradiction. But a creature possessed of absolute perfection is a contradiction; for self-existence is essential to absolute perfection; but a self-existent creature is a plain contradiction, since it supposes a creature to exist of itself, and not of itself at the same time. It is implied in the very notion of a creature, that it is dependent—dependent for its existence and all its properties on the Being who created it. However exalted may be the qualities imparted to it, it must always be inferior to its Creator; an effect must be inferior to its cause. Absolute perfection, therefore, is peculiar to that Being who is self-existent and independent. Whatever powers and excellencies it may please him to communicate, it is impossible that he should communicate, in their original perfection, his own attributes.—These are incommunicable. We cannot, indeed, but conceive of such a Being as almighty—that is, as able to do all that is possible to be done; but to communicate his own attributes in their original perfection, *is* a thing impossible to be done, since to render a creature *self*-existent, or absolutely independent, implies a direct contradiction.

The evil of imperfection must therefore of necessity exist, supposing there is a creation. It follows, that it is not incompatible with almighty power and infinite goodness to produce imperfect creatures, or, rather, that it is not compatible with these attributes, that it is not possible in the nature of things, to produce perfect creatures. God might indeed have refrained from creating; and, had it been wiser and better to produce no creatures than imperfect creatures, he would have remained eternally alone, without witnesses and without participators of his happiness. But if there be a creation, there must be imperfection, and all the other evils necessarily resulting from this great and original evil are absolutely unavoidable.

Nor in strictness does this evil of imperfection arise from the Creator, but from the original nonentity of the creature. Every created thing was a negation or nonentity before it had a primitive being, and, when it had a primitive being communicated to it, it had just so much of its primitive negation taken away from it. So far as it is, its being is to be attributed to the Sovereign Cause that produced it; so far as it is not, its not being is to be attributed to the original nonentity out of which it was produced. That which was once nothing would still have been nothing, had it not been for the Cause that gave existence to it; and, therefore, that it is so far nothing still, that is, limited and defective, is only to be attributed to its own primitive nothingness.

Of the second class of evil, namely, that which is termed natural, and which consists of pain produced by natural causes, it cannot in strictness be said that it is necessary and inevitable. The *tendency* of bodies to corruption and putrefaction, indeed, on which single law the most stupendous, and sometimes apparently the most disastrous consequences depend, could not in the nature of things have been avoided. All objects in nature are composed of matter. Matter without motion is useless. To be of any conceivable service, it must possess such motion as will separate it into solid and fluid parts, and retain those parts in a solid and fluid state. This cannot take place unless it be endowed with the properties of attraction and repulsion. We can form no conception of a solid body, without supposing the particles of which it is composed to possess such an attraction for each other as to cause them to cohere, nor of an æriform fluid, without supposing its particles to be mutually repulsive. But the motions produced by attraction and repulsion must of necessity be contrary to each other. Contrariety of motion cannot be separated from the operation of these great principles, even in idea.—Contrariety of motion produces separation of parts, overcomes the power of cohesion, disunites the principles of which a compound body is composed, and resolves it into its simple elements. This is dissolution, or corruption. The simple elements thus disengaged, in obedience to the laws of attraction, operating differently under different circumstances, enter into new combinations, and form new substances. This is reproduction. While all that is great, and fair, and good, in the natural world, depend upon these processes, all that is evil also derives its origin from the same source. Thus the tendency to the production of evil is inseparably connected with the necessary motion of matter; but it does not therefore follow, that evil must exist.—

There is a wide difference between the tendency to the production of evil, and the actual production of it. It might be strictly impossible even for an infinite power and wisdom to prevent the liability to evil, while an effectual and sure provision might be made against the actual existence of it. A tendency to evil, not in the nature of things to be avoided, might be counteracted with absolute certainty, and forever, either by a modification of the laws of motion, or by rendering some motions corrective of others; because all natural evil is the consequence, either of some property imparted to matter, or of some law to which matter endowed with certain properties is subjected. Any evil produced by any property or law might have been prevented by changing the property or modifying the law, or by making some other property or law counteract the operation of the one in question.

The disunion of bodies, and the formation of new compounds—that is, their continual transition, through the processes of dissolution and recomposition—do not comprehend the whole class of natural evils. Pain of body, uneasiness of mind, ungratified appetite, and death, must be included in this number. These can by no means be considered as evils which are absolutely inseparable from material beings—because man in a state of innocence was without them—and they will not annoy the happiness of the celestial world. The relative circumstances of beings might have been so ordered, as perfectly to exclude them. Their existence, therefore, cannot, like the evil of defect, be referred to the unalterable nature of things. In whatever degree they exist, they exist by the will and appointment of the Creator. Even with our imperfect knowledge, we can clearly perceive how he might prevent them. Why, then, does he not prevent them?

It is self-evident, that the answer to this question must be totally different from the answer to the question, why has he not made all things absolutely perfect? Absolute perfection it is out of the power of Omnipotence itself to communicate, because absolute perfection in a creature is a contradiction in terms. But pain of body, uneasiness of mind, disappointment of appetite, death, the separation and corruption of the parts of any, and of all sensitive creatures, it is in his power to prevent at all times and in a perfect measure.

Why, then, has he not prevented them?—Because they are necessary to his plan.—They are the instruments he has chosen to accomplish the wise and beneficent purposes of his creation. They are as much a part of benevolence, and as real an evidence of it, as the most exquisite pleasures he has communicated, because they are agents by the operation of which he perceived that he could produce the largest amount of happiness.—It is of the utmost importance, that the mind should have a clear perception of this truth, and an undoubting conviction of it.

When the Deity determined on the work of creation, we may suppose that all possible systems were present to his mind. All which infinite power and wisdom could effect, in the production of happiness, must have been known to him, because his knowledge is absolute and perfect. This amount of happiness he must have determined to produce, because, since he could have engaged in this work only to communicate happiness, it is inconceivable that he should have chosen the lesser in preference to the greater good.—It has been shown that he could not communicate absolute perfection to any creature.—That degree of perfection, which his infinite wisdom perceived to be the highest that it would, upon the whole, be best to impart, he communicated, and to as great a number of intelligences as possible; possible, that is, in consistency with the greatest sum of happiness. These creatures occupying the first rank in the creation, he endowed with certain natures and attributes; but, the universe being as full of these as possible, there might still be room for others of different natures and different attributes. These latter might not at all interfere with the former. Inferior they must be, but though inferior they might still possess a high degree of excellence, and enjoy an incalculable amount of happiness.—Their imperfection could not possibly detract from the enjoyment of the higher order, but only in a certain measure from their own; and, after the necessary allowance is made for this, there might be left a vast balance of excellence and happiness. Now that balance, to whatever it amount, is obviously just so much excellence and happiness produced in the creation, which could not have been produced, had the higher order only existed; that is, had not the degree of imperfection necessarily attached to the inferior order been permitted. When, again, we suppose the universe to be as full as possible of creatures in the second rank, we can imagine a third order still inferior to the second, and so constituted as not at all to interfere with it; then we can conceive of a fourth, subordinate to the third, and a lower still, and yet a lower. According to this supposition, there is a scale of being, at the top of which is the Great First Cause of all. Between him and the highest created intelligence there is an infinite distance, but from the highest order of creatures, a gradation to the bottom of the scale, which is nothing, or non-existence—every intermediate degree being full—full of creatures, happy according to their several powers and capacities—all subserving the most important ends to themselves and the system, and the higher orders never interfering with the lower, nor the lower with the higher. In relation to subjects so much above our present knowledge and capacity, it becomes us to think and speak with the greatest diffidence and humility; but there is something so reasonable and beautiful in this conception, and it leads us to form such exalted apprehensions of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, that we can scarcely be wrong in cherishing it.

If this representation be just, there can be no question, that creation is a most benevolent and glorious work—that it is consistent with perfect goodness to give being to imperfect creatures, that it is equally consistent with it to place creatures in different ranks, and to communicate to some higher degrees of perfection than to others, since by this means the sum of happiness is immeasurably increased. Hence, too, we perceive the true answer to all such questions as these—Why are not creatures made higher and better? Why are there not more? Why is not such an order of beings endowed with such and such faculties and perfections? Why is it subject to such evils? The universe is as full of creatures as it can be; creatures are endowed with as high degrees of perfection as is possible; as many of the highest exist as can exist. Creatures of a certain order are not endowed with such and such faculties and perfections, because, if they were, they would no longer be creatures of that order; and all other orders are full. To whatever imperfections and evils they are subject, they have reason to adore the boundless goodness of their Author, for it is because his goodness is boundless, that he chose rather to give them existence with these evils, together with a vast preponderance of happiness, than no existence at all.

Inseparably connected with this view of the creation, is the opinion, that creatures are continually advancing from one degree of knowledge, perfection, and happiness, to another, without ever coming to a period. It is possible that there are beings placed in an unalterable condition, formed at first with all the perfection of which their natures are capable. Such an order of beings may be second only to the Deity in excellence and glory, and occupy the top of the scale of the creation. We can imagine such an order, and if its existence be really wise and good, without doubt it does exist; but we know so little even of ourselves and of our own world, and are so entirely ignorant of all others, that, while pursuing such speculations, we cannot be too cautious and diffident. But, as far as we are capable of judging, it seems probable that there is no such order—that no being is fixed in an unalterable condition in the highest possible degree of perfection; for we cannot well conceive of such degree, since that which admits of continual addition can have no highest. According to our best conceptions, it seems more reasonable to believe that the highest order of beings, at whatever point they commenced their career, are constantly advancing, and will continue to advance forever. And though their progress be inconceivably rapid, and continue through all the ages of eternity, they can never come to a period, because there must always be an infinite distance between them and the Creator. These conceptions open to our view a prospect of stupendous magnificence and glory. There is nothing in religion more beautiful and triumphant. Conceive of various orders of creatures, thus going on from strength to strength, thus forever gaining new accessions, and brightening to all eternity, through everlasting ages, adding knowledge to knowledge, and excellence to excellence; what can be more glorious? Surely, 'it must be a prospect pleasing to God himself, to see his creation thus forever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him by degrees of resemblance.'

But we need not stop even here, in the justification of the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, in creating beings of different orders, and endowing them with different degrees of perfection; for it can be proved, that the very evils which prevail among the inferior orders are rendered subservient to their own well being, and to that of the system. If this can be shown, if the benevolent operation of evil can be established, and if this be connected, as it ought to be connected, with the truth, that all reasonable beings, however inferior the condition in which they commence their existence, are destined to rise higher and higher, in endless progression, and to contribute to their own advancement, the proof of the infinite benignity of the Creator must be admitted to be complete.

That evil, under the superintendence of infinite wisdom and benignity, is the means of producing ultimate good, has already been proved. In addition to the evidence which has been adduced of this most important truth, the following considerations deserve great attention.

All natural evils are reducible to one, namely, pain. There is nothing in the nature and motion of matter, nothing in any actual or possible result of these, which is considered evil, that is not so denominated, only because its ultimate effect is to produce in the sensitive creation uneasy sensations, that is pain. But there is no pain which has not for its object the production of good. There is no motion of matter which produces pain to an animal, unless that motion tend to its destruction, and the pain occasioned by the injuring cause serves to prevent the injury. In proportion, therefore, as the preservation of the being is a good, this pain is a good.

Pain is nothing but a sense, that some part of the animal frame is perishing, or is in danger of perishing. Those motions which are conducive to the health, vigour, and preservation of an animal, are pleasurable. There is no exception to this in the whole animal economy. Those motions which tend to its destruction are painful. Now, since the animal is thus warned against what is injurious, and instructed what to avoid, the benevolence displayed in this constitution is so much the more perfect, in as much as it is the effect of consummate wisdom. If we were not thus warned of danger, if the motions of external bodies, and the deranged action of our own organs, did not thus apprize us of their presence, and lead us to take precaution against their injurious operation, we could scarcely move a single step, or suffer the least illness, without perishing; and our destruction, whenever it came, must always be sudden, and without the slightest notice.

Nor could any thing excepting pain answer the purpose. A mere knowledge of the presence or approach of danger would not be sufficient. Knowledge is easily disregarded, but pain is a visitant that will not be slighted. It will make itself attended to. Men often do know that danger is nigh; but this knowledge is so far from inducing them to avoid it, that it seems only to make them court it. And this occurs so frequently, and respecting dangers so likely to be fatal, as to afford abundant proof, that, were our preservation left to mere knowledge, there is no business or pleasure which might not deprive us of existence. And it ought never to be forgotten, that, whenever the pain of life upon the whole exceeds its pleasure, pain and life generally cease together; that is, when existence can no longer afford pleasure, it is brought to a close. This is exactly what might have been expected of perfect benevolence. The Creator produced all things out of nothing, and of his own pleasure gave existence to all that live. In justice, therefore he seems obliged to render the existence of every creature a good, the whole of its being considered. It is not consistent with benevolence, to suffer the condition of any creature to be upon the whole worse than non-existence. The balance of happiness is and must be in favour of every sentient being. Within this limit, the Creator may render the condition of any creature whatever he pleases; that is, whatever the greatest happiness of the system may require. At first sight, indeed, it seems as if the communication of a certain degree of happiness, without any admixture of pain, were more consistent with perfect benevolence than a mere balance of happiness. But this is altogether unreasonable. If a creature possess four degrees of happiness and one of pain, it is not only a gainer by existence, but it gains more than it would do, were it to enjoy only one degree of pure pleasure.

Upon the whole, then, it is evident, that all natural evils are not only consistent with infinite wisdom and perfect benevolence, but are as much proofs of these attributes, as the purest pleasure of the most exalted intelligence.

And the same, without doubt, is true of moral evil. By moral evil is meant that pain which is occasioned by wrong volitions. There are pains which result from the constitution of the material world, and the operation of the laws of nature—that is, from natural causes; these are natural evils. Moral evils are the very same with volition superadded. Moral evil, then, is dependent upon natural. A thing is morally evil which produces, or tends to produce, natural evil; and it is morally evil only because, and in so far as, it produces, or tends to produce, natural evil.

All evil is pain. But some pains arise from natural causes, without our consent, often without our knowledge; and these, as we have said, are natural evils. Others are the consequence of a wrong volition, and these are termed moral evils. The difference between natural and moral evil, therefore, is not in their natures, but in their causes. Their natures are the very same, namely, pain, inconvenience, injury to ourselves or others. In this precisely; and in this alone, consists the evil of both; but the ill effects of the one proceed from volition—those of the other from natural causes; and hence moral evil is justly and precisely said to be natural evil, with volition superadded.

Since, then, moral evil is thus dependent on natural evil—since there is nothing wrong in any volition which does not lead to natural evil, it is obvious, that natural evil is worse than moral evil; for that which makes a thing bad must, of necessity possess a more evil nature than that which it renders bad. How unreasonable, then, is that reluctance which is felt to refer moral evil to the Deity! All writers boldly trace natural evil to the appointment of the Great First Cause of all things, but they hesitate to ascribe to him the appointment of moral evil. They feel no reluctance to trace to him the greater, but they shrink with a kind of horror from ascribing to him the lesser evil. Without doubt, he causes both, but he does not cause moral evil any more than natural evil as evil; he does not rest in it as an ultimate object; he produces it for the sake of the greater good of which it is the instrument. And, in causing it with this end, he does not really produce evil, but the greater ultimate good.*

That the existence of moral evil must be referred to the will of the Deity, is acknowledged by the author quoted below. 'I believe,' he says, 'there is no person of good understanding, who will venture to say he is certain that it is impossible it should be best, taking in the whole compass and extent of existence, and all consequences in the endless series of events, that there should be such a thing as moral evil in the world. And if so, it will certainly follow, that an infinitely wise Being, who always chooses what is best, must choose that there be such a thing.'†

Whether the will be invariably determined by motive, and cannot possibly choose otherwise than it does, all the previous circumstances remaining the same—or whether it be a self-moving power, capable of choosing or not choosing in any given case, naturally independent of any mediate or immediate, external or internal force, compulsion, influence, or necessity, and physically determined neither by bodily sensations, appetites, &c., nor mental perceptions, reason nor judgment'—in a word, a proper self-determining power, capable 'of choosing with a motive, contrary to a motive, or without any motive at all'—in either case, the existence of moral evil must alike be traced to God. According to the former hypothesis, from that constitution of

* 'God does not will sin as sin, or for the sake of any thing evil, though it be his pleasure so to order things, that, he permitting, sin will come to pass, *for the sake of the great good that, by his disposal, shall be the consequence.*'—*Edwards on the Will*, part iv. sect. ix. p. 371, 3d edition.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 369, 370.

things of which the Great First Cause is the author, arise certain appearances, those appearances cause certain perceptions, these perceptions form a judgment, this judgment determines the will, and this will produces action. That action, therefore, the fixed, certain, and intended result of all the preceding causes, must be referred to the appointment of the First Cause. According to the latter hypothesis, freewill, a self-moving, self-determining power, was bestowed upon man by the Creator. The nature of this faculty, and all the effects of which it would be the agent, he perfectly knew. He made the faculty what it is, and communicated it to man such as it is, with a perfect foreknowledge, that man would certainly so use it as to produce moral evil. This is distinctly admitted by the best writers on this subject. Moral evil, they grant, is the effect of wrong volition; but the only true and proper cause of volition and action, they contend, is freewill, this self-moving power, and the only cause of this 'is the Creator who communicated it.' If, therefore, there be any truth in the maxim, that the cause of the cause is the cause of the thing caused, it follows, inevitably, that God is the author of moral evil, in as much as he is the sole cause of that which he certainly knew would be the cause of it. Hence, according to the doctrine of freewill, as much as according to the doctrine of necessity, the Deity is the cause of moral evil, in as real and strict a sense as he is of natural evil. In truth, he is alike the cause of both, and he has appointed both for the same wise and benevolent reason, namely, because he saw that they would produce the greatest sum of good.

Though natural evil is so obviously, in some cases, the means of producing a preponderance of good, and though we have the fullest assurance, from the best established analogy, that it is so in all, yet, on account of our total ignorance of many parts of nature, and our inability to comprehend the great whole, there are numerous instances in which we cannot see how it will have this issue.

Of the moral world we are still more ignorant. Mind, its operations, the laws by which it is governed, its relation to other minds, and to the great Eternal Mind, its volitions, and the actions that depend upon its volitions—in a word, the whole of this vast system appears to us much more obscure and complicated even than the relations of physical objects to each other, and the manner in which each promotes the order and harmony of the whole. That we should find a still greater difficulty in explaining how a preponderance of good should be the result of the prevalence of moral evil, is therefore to be expected; but, whatever difficulty we may have in explaining the manner of the fact, of the fact itself we cannot doubt. For it has been shown that moral evil is evil only as it is the cause of natural evil—that, were moral evil without any tendency to produce natural evil, it would be no longer moral evil—it would be no longer evil of any kind. Since, then, natural evil is universally acknowledged to be the means of producing good, moral evil must of necessity be so, because it contains no evil but natural, all the evil it contains being identical with natural evil. Whatever perplexity, therefore, may be occasioned, by the contemplation of any particular instance of moral evil, of all the relations of which we are ignorant, this single consideration would seem to be sufficient to set the mind at rest on this difficult and most important subject.

But, in point of fact, we have the like proof from experience, that moral evil is the means of producing good, that we have of the beneficial operation of natural evil. If there be one individual, the disposition of whose mind, and the conduct of whose life, have been improved by the moral evils into which he has fallen, this proof is established. There is no more reason in the nature of the thing, why the temporary prevalence of vice may not lead to the advancement and exaltation of virtue, than why the temporary derangement of the functions of a corporeal organ may not excite actions within it which shall ultimately produce a more firm and vigorous health.—We know, by experience, that the latter is often the case, and experience gives us the same assurance that the former is so. How many persons have been taught by the seductions of sin, with a strength of feeling which no other means could have excited, the sweetness and loveliness of goodness! How many have been induced to attach themselves to virtue, with an ardour and devotedness which could not have existed, had they not experienced the meanness and odiousness of vice! How deep a sense, how affecting an impression of piety, has sometimes immediately succeeded some blameable neglect of its duties, or forgetfulness of its spirit! How many thousands have been taught the enormity, and saved from the commission of great crimes, by the stings of remorse, produced by the consciousness of lesser guilt! These and many similar examples are indications that moral evil is a most active and beneficent agent in forming and perfecting the moral character; they afford good reason to believe that it will be the means, through every future period of its existence, of rendering the human being holier and happier. Although at present its agency is thus *obviously* beneficial only in a few individuals, yet the present is the first state of discipline in which the evil doer has been placed, and there is an eternity before him, and all the various means which absolute wisdom and unbounded power can bring to operate upon him.

The examples to which allusion has been made establish the fact, that the operation of moral evil is beneficial to the moral delinquent. One such example is sufficient to prove the truth of the principle; and, the principle once established, the great difficulty which seems to attach to the divine government is removed. All instances appearing to lead to an opposite conclusion, from our not knowing how they will terminate in produc-

ing a preponderance of good, are merely arguments from our ignorance. However numerous or perplexing, they afford not the slightest evidence in contradiction to a principle established by positive proof. They are mere appearances—appearances as likely to be false as real. It is as conceivable that they may be in perfect accordance with this principle, as in contradiction to it. Of this principle, in the mean time, there is certain evidence, and this evidence cannot of course be affected by appearances which may as reasonably be supposed to be in harmony with it as in opposition to it.

It is universally acknowledged that moral evil is essential to the existence of some virtues. Forbearance, forgiveness, clemency, generosity, resistance to temptation, devotedness to the reformation of vice—all these necessarily imply the prevalence of moral evil. Moral evil, then, constitutes an essential part of that discipline to which we are indebted for the formation and vigour of the highest excellencies. This is a separate and decisive proof of the beneficial operation of moral evil in general, and it is a presumptive proof, that it will be ultimately beneficial in every instance.

We can conceive that beings of a higher order might have needed no experience of vice, to teach them the beauty and excellence of virtue—that they might have been made sensible of the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of the Deity, by being rendered perfectly happy in him and in each other; but it does not seem possible for such imperfect creatures as we are, to have attained to this knowledge and felicity without some previous admixture of suffering. By no other means could we have had so deep a sense of the mercy of our heavenly Father, of his forgiveness, of his infinite goodness in providing the means of escaping from the consequences of sin, and in holding out to us so glorious a reward for our sincere endeavours to prepare ourselves for pure and unmixed happiness.—By the memory of our former imperfections and sufferings, by the power of contrast, or, perhaps by means inseparably connected with what we now are, though we cannot trace the connexion, or by other methods which we cannot at present comprehend, he may make us, through every future period of our being, unspeakably better and happier for what we endure, than we could otherwise have been. He has infinite compensations in his power; and if our infirmities and pains are necessary to our own well being, and to the order and harmony of the system, to have withheld them would not have been benevolence, but the want of it.

Upon the whole, then, if some degree of evil, both natural and moral, be indispensable—if this evil be made the means of producing a preponderance of good, and if the compensation thus afforded for its temporary prevalence, extending through eternity, be absolutely without limit, the perfect benevolence of the Deity must be admitted to be established. And it cannot but afford the contemplative and virtuous mind the highest satisfaction, to know that the actual amount of moral evil is extremely small, compared with what is commonly apprehended. For one crime there are many virtues; for one act of cruelty there are ten of kindness; for one offence, destructive to the happiness of individuals and of society, there are a thousand innocent, peaceful, and generous transactions. The worst characters are often acquired by one or two evil actions; and if the deeds of any one day, in the life of any bad man, however devoted to wickedness, be examined, there will be found ten that are useful, or at least innoxious, for one that is positively injurious. A single instance of theft, violence, or murder, fills a whole neighbourhood with consternation, and oftentimes forms the topic of conversation for weeks or months; but no one thinks of noticing the thousands and thousands of innocent, peaceful, honest, and benevolent actions which are performed every day. The reason is, that the latter are the common and ordinary events of life—the former its rare occurrences. One evil action may deprive a person or many persons of existence; but no life can have been reared and protected to maturity or adolescence, without the exercise of more charities, of more truly humane, and virtuous, and often-repeated sympathies, than it is possible to number.

Nothing can be unjust, if it be not unjust in the great question concerning moral evil, to overlook its real tendency and its actual amount.

SECTION III.

Of the Evils of the Social State, and especially of the Evils which are alleged to result from the Principle of Population.

There is another class of evil, which, though it is really of the same nature as moral evil, and is only a particular modification of it, yet deserves a separate consideration, because it is under this form that the most frequent and calamitous examples of moral evil occur. It is not wonderful that the evils which have hitherto been found inseparable from the social state should have excited the most deep and abiding doubts of the perfect goodness of the Creator, because they are constantly forced on our observation, they are subject to peculiar occasional aggravations, and they are at all times unequal in their distribution. But a calm investigation of their nature, their amount, their mitigations, and their tendency, will satisfy the mind that their apppointment is consistent with perfect benevolence.

The chief evils of the social state are poverty, dependence, and servitude. The vice and misery to which these evils at all times give rise, and the mental and moral degradation and wretchedness which they sometimes produce, are so extreme, that, in the contemplation of them, and especially while suffering under them, it may too often, with truth,

be said, that 'Reason stands aghast, and Faith herself is half confounded.' It does indeed require a most clear and comprehensive knowledge of the principles and ends of the divine government, to think and feel aright amidst the sorrows and the crimes of life.

These evils, terrible as they are, it does not seem possible for infinite wisdom and benevolence wholly to have avoided. For, to beings constituted as men are constituted, possessing only a limited understanding, having mutual intercourse, and standing in need of each other's assistance, to promote the common good, some kind of government is indispensable. But it is impossible to administer the affairs of the community without a delegation of the power to some one, or to some few, to determine the measures to be pursued for the common good. Those entrusted with this power must be in better circumstances than those whose duty it is to obey; that is, they may, with greater certainty and ease, and in more cases, obtain their ends, effect their choice, and accomplish their desires. By greater talents, or greater industry, or better health, or better opportunities, or more favourable conjunctures, some must become more wealthy than others, while, from a want of talents, of industry, of health, or of opportunities, some must be reduced to poverty, and hence the other great evils of the social state, dependence and servitude, must inevitably follow.

A state of perfect equality is indeed conceivable, and perhaps possible, in which all men might live together in ease and plenty, sharing alike the bounties of nature. This is a speculation in which some of the wisest and best men have delighted to indulge; for, in the realization of this captivating vision, they have anticipated, not only a vast addition to the sum of positive enjoyment, but a total absence of all the evils peculiar to the social state, and without doubt, in a society thus constituted, the absence of poverty, dependence, and servitude, might be secured; but it is questionable whether the sum of enjoyment would be increased, and whether the disadvantages of such a change would not overbalance the advantages. For, in a state of equal and universal plenty, ease, and happiness, what is there, that could afford that stimulus to exertion, which is essential to the developement of the noblest faculties of our nature? All observation, all experience, all history, whether extending back to the earliest periods of which we have any record of our race, or embracing any intermediate period down to the present, whether relating to savage or to civilized society, prove that man, in all countries, in all climates, under all institutions, in fact under every variety of circumstance hitherto known, sinks into a state of indolence, when not excited to action by some powerful stimulus. And that a state of indolence is a state in which the human faculties not only could not be improved, but could not even be unfolded, has never been called in question.

A provision for this stimulus was therefore indispensable, and by the existing structure of society it is afforded. Its effect is to place every individual in circumstances which force him to exertion. Either for himself, or for those dear to him as himself—either by the direct pressure of want, or by the fear of want—either to maintain himself in the situation in which he is placed by birth, or to raise himself to a higher rank, every one is compelled to the cultivation and exercise of his powers. No one can be idle. In a world which will produce nothing without culture—in a state of society in which the consumers are constantly, however slowly, increasing, every one who partakes of the supply actually raised must contribute to its replenishing. The difficulty, yet the absolute necessity, of procuring food, puts the faculties of the mind on the stretch, to invent expedients for increasing its quantity, and for abridging the labour necessary to raise it. Hence arts are cultivated, and hence, in the progress of society, of which this activity is the efficient cause, and in the division of property and the distinction of ranks, which wonderfully increase this activity, and render it indispensable, leisure is afforded to some for the pursuits of science; so that, while the productions of the arts, which embellish life, and add to its happiness in a degree of which it is not possible that we can adequately judge, are multiplied, the mind is further expanded, and the faculties strengthened, and the manners softened, and the heart meliorated by philosophy and literature.

There is not, indeed, among the inestimable blessings of civilization, a single good, for which man is not indebted, directly or remotely, to this stimulus, and which may not be traced either to the hope of bettering his condition, or the fear of making it worse, or to some habit of mental or corporeal exertion, induced by that hope of rising, or that fear of falling, which any structure of society, at all resembling the present, must ever supply, and ever render vigorous. Put an end to that stimulus, and you put an end at once to all the projects of the head, and all the labours of the hand; you not only render advancement impossible, but retrogression inevitable; you reduce the world to a waste, and you exchange the refined and dignified pleasures of society for the wretchedness of the naked savage.

Any change, therefore, with whatever advantages it might otherwise be attended, which should take away this essential stimulus, must be fatal to man's highest happiness.

Moreover, if it be the Creator's design, (and that it is, reason and revelation alike declare,) by the circumstances of the present state, to form and to prove our character, to prepare us for future happiness, and to make our own exertions in a great measure the means of securing it, nothing can be conceived better adapted to accomplish this purpose, than a state of society so constructed as to admit of poverty, dependence, and servitude. For, while such a constitution of society is admirably calculated to produce and foster the highest excellencies of which our nature is capable, no concomitant evils, however ca-

lamitous, can reasonably disturb our minds, because they are only temporary; their existence is limited—ours is without end; they exist for a time, but it is for the sole purpose of making us blessed throughout eternity. In what way some particular combinations of these evils will ultimately contribute to the excellence of our character, and the augmentation of our happiness we do not know; but we know that they will do so, and that they exist, for no other purpose. And if this be the truth—if we are really endowed with an improvable nature—if we are placed in circumstances which must necessarily call forth and invigorate our faculties—if, though weak, ignorant, and suffering, in this, the commencement of our career, we be indeed destined to an everlasting progress in knowledge, virtue, and happiness—if all the evils to which we are now subject are intended to be, and actually are, the means of securing and promoting that progress—if the present be but the first stage of our great journey—if we shall soon enter on another state, in which all that seems disordered now will then appear harmonious, because designs which are only commenced here will there be carried on and perfected—in a word, if there be reserved for us an immortality of unmixed, universal, and ever-enduring enjoyment, the benevolence of the Creator, in giving us existence, and placing us in our present circumstances, is not only not questionable, but is perfect and infinite; and to argue that it is questionable, on account of the partial and temporary prevalence of these evils, is as rash and foolish as it would be, on observing a complicated piece of machinery, in which were seen numerous wheels, some working in opposite directions, and apparently counteracting the movements of others, to say that the master-spring, by which all is kept in motion, produces nothing but confusion, *without attending to the result of the whole*—a result, perhaps, simple and beautiful.

Whatever, therefore, be the amount of the evils which prevail in that part of the system which we at present see, this account of their purpose and operation is sufficient to make the system itself appear, as indeed it is, perfectly harmonious and infinitely good.

Nor can it with the least justice be objected, that, even allowing to these evils the purpose which is here assigned, they are greater than is necessary; because, if the principle be admitted on which the preceding reasoning is founded, that is all which can be required. He is as ill-instructed in philosophy, as he is in the proper office of human reason, who supposes that, with its present knowledge, it can determine, not only the exact means, but the exact measure and proportion of the means, by which it is fit that the Creator should accomplish the purposes of his creation.

Nor can it be doubted, that both the number and magnitude of the evils of the social state are in general exceedingly overrated. Often there is no real evil where much is apprehended; and, where evil does exist, it is generally accompanied with many mitigations.

Were the accommodations of the affluent universal, the evils of the social state would, in the general estimation, almost cease to exist; for of the condition of the rich no complaint is made, the general conviction being, that their sources of happiness are certain and abundant; but the question which constantly forces itself on the mind is, Why is the allotment of good so unequal? Why are the rich blessed with every thing that can gratify the sense and refine the mind, and the poor 'deprived of almost every accommodation that can render life tolerable or secure?'

The answer is, that in general the allotment of good is not unequal, and that, in the few cases in which it is unequal, alleviations are afforded, which render the very existence of the evils complained of at least questionable. He can have looked into human life but seldom, and never with attention, who has not found the fact often forced upon his observation, that happiness is much more equally distributed, than a survey of the external circumstances of society would render probable.

The advantages of the rich over the poor, to which the mind most readily adverts, and which appear at first sight extremely great, are exemption from labour, and superior accommodations.

Exemption from labour is so far from giving the rich any real advantage over the poor, that the want of fixed, regular employment is one of the very means by which the actual enjoyment of the former is brought down to a level with that of the latter. Occupation is essential to human happiness. The real enjoyment of the man who rises every day with a certain portion of work to accomplish, provided it be not oppressive to the strength or the faculties, is as much greater than the happiness of him who is without occupation, as the apparent accommodations of the prince are superior to those of the peasant. Nothing is more common than complaints of the fatigue of labour, and the irksomeness of business; nothing is more conducive, and nothing more indispensable to happiness.

The complaints which are made of the constancy and severity of manual labour, as labour is distributed at present, are much more reasonable. And yet the cheerfulness of the husbandman, as he pursues his daily toil, is proverbial. The expression of his countenance is not that of misery; the language of his tongue is not that of murmuring. Countenances pale with care—countenances darkened with the gloom of disappointment and despondency, and which appear but the darker for the smile that sometimes sits on them—countenances which exhibit an appalling picture of tumultuous passion, of bitter, unrecompensed suffering, must be sought where the wealthy toil for wealth, where the ambitious strive to rise, and the risen fear to fall. The labourer is a stranger to the very name of these sufferings, than which, the human heart knows few more dreadful. His day is peaceful; his pillow receives him to undisturbed and refreshing slumber. In the past he sees nothing to regret—in the future nothing to fear. His task

is regular; his recompense is certain; and here is his compensation, and the rich *know* it is a compensation, for the want of the conveniences which riches purchase. The severity of his labour, without doubt, is greater than is consistent with humanity, or required by utility; but, as the arts improve, the necessity of great manual exertion will be lessened, and, as society advances, the time requisite to devote to industry will be abridged. In the mean time, the oppressiveness of labour is much more really than apparently diminished by that power which the human strength possesses of accommodating itself to its imposed burthen; and it is observable, that, excessive as the exertions of the labouring classes are, their recreations are all athletic.

There is little foundation for the complaint of the irksomeness of the employments to which great numbers are condemned. To employments the most disgusting the mind is reconciled by habit. The tastes of men are infinitely various. An occupation of which one person can never think without horror, another chooses and delights in; a situation in which one man would die of disgust is endeared to another by the gratifications of which it is the source. Professions the most laborious and hazardous are often the fixed choice of those who might have pursued the most easy and secure. There is no occupation forced on man by necessity, which is without its compensation, and no situation so advantageous as to be the object of general ambition, which is without its peculiar, and not unfrequently its overbalancing inconvenience.

At least, with equal truth, it may be affirmed, that the superior accommodations of the rich uniformly fail to bring with them the happiness they promise. There is a power in constant operation, which, notwithstanding the gayety and pomp of their appearance—notwithstanding the sumptuous and overflowing board which is daily spread for them, levels their proud distinctions, and raises the peasant, in his humble garb, and with his frugal fare, at least to an equality in enjoyment; that power is habit. Be the apparel of the rich as gorgeous as the arts of luxury can make it, it affords no more comfort to the wearer, than the coarsest habiliment of poverty. To the pleasurable sensations of the body, its costliness cannot conduce. The gratification which it might afford the mind is effectually counteracted by the great equalizer of the inequalities of fortune; and while, beneath the ermine and the purple, the heart is oppressed with care, or torn with the fangs of wounded pride and disappointed ambition, beneath the texture of the coarsest woof it beats with freedom, and is at peace.

Nor can the luxuries which pamper the appetite be reckoned among the sources of pleasure, though they may be, and are, among the most powerful of the means which equalize the actual enjoyments of the rich and poor, by scourging the former with many pains and diseases to which the latter are strangers.—Luxury may pall the senses, and does so; but it neither quickens the appetite, nor increases the pleasure of its gratification. The peasant looks forward to his humble repast with satisfaction—a satisfaction of which he is seldom cheated—while the rich sit down to their sumptuous fare with little appetite, partake of it with less pleasure, and arise without refreshment. And to his humble habitation the peasant is as completely reconciled as the man of wealth is habitually unconscious of his palace; habit, which makes the one satisfied without magnificence, renders magnificence little satisfactory to the other.

These are plainly adventitious circumstances, of which happiness is independent. It may be great with them—it may be equally great without them. In the essentials of happiness, in occupation and health, the lot of the poor is at least as favourable as that of the rich, while their common nature is subject to like infirmities. Both are equally exposed to pain and to disease, or, if in these respects one be more exempted from suffering than the other, that exemption is in favour of the poor. So true it is, that, 'when Providence divided the earth among a few lordly masters, it neither forgot nor abandoned those who seemed to have been left out in the partition. In what contributes to the real happiness of human life, these last are in no respect inferior to those who would seem so much above them. In ease of body, and peace of mind, the different ranks of life are nearly upon a level.'*

Nor is the evil which is incident to an uncivilized state by any means so great as is commonly imagined. This is a class of evil, the extent of which is at all times small, yet the reality is less than the appearance, because it is provided with many mitigations.

From the difficulty of procuring subsistence, the number of persons who labour under the privations and sufferings of a rude state of society must of necessity be small. Whenever that number increases so as to become considerable, agriculture must be cultivated, some degree of civilization must commence, and its progress must keep at least equal pace with population. It has been estimated, that the evils belonging to the lowest state of the human race are confined to the four-hundredth part of the whole, and that, on the largest calculation, those who enjoy the advantages of civilization in comparatively a slight degree only, cannot exceed a fortieth of the inhabitants of the globe.

Nor are these people without enjoyment.—Every thing which is known of them proves that their situation brings with it many satisfactions. It is indeed so greatly endeared to them, that it is with the utmost difficulty they can be induced to resign it for one which reason and experience show to be beyond all calculation more advantageous. Of this, abundant evidence is on record. Many experi-

*Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, part iv. chap. i.

ments which have been made on individuals and on tribes attest the fact. 'These people are not envious of that civilization of which we are so proud. We may wonder at their ignorance and prejudice, but we must recollect that men are formed by habit, and that all their sufferings and enjoyments are comparative. How often do we see them rejoicing under hardships and bondage, and repining at their lot, when courted by liberty and fortune! The feelings we receive from living in one state of society disqualify us for judging of those of another; but he who has travelled over the greater space will be most struck with the equal dispensation of happiness and misery, and his value for knowledge will not be decreased by observing that those are not always the most happy who possess it. The savage, still less than the citizen, can be made to quit that manner of life, in which he is trained; he loves the freedom of mind which will not be bound to any task, and which owns no superior; and however tempted to mix with polished nations, and to better his fortune, the first moment of liberty brings him to his woods again.'* What is the just inference? Not that his choice, when he has the power to choose, is wise—not that his lot, while he remains uncivilized, is advantageous—but that pain cannot press heavily on him, and that his situation is not unproductive of pleasure. When he feels the pain of hunger, he does not reject food; when he sees danger nigh, he does not refuse to avoid it. Habit can do much, but it cannot make a human being in love with pain, or lead him to consider release from it a misfortune. From the fact, then, that it is confessedly difficult to wean the savage from the charms of an indolent and wandering life, it is certain that that life cannot be without some compensation for the evils to which it is exposed.

But there are abundant attestations to the truth, that positive pleasures enjoyed in these rude states of society are by no means inconsiderable. 'Among the North-American savages, when they are stationary, and the business of the day is over, it is customary for the entire village to sup together at the same time. The prelude to it is a dance of an hour, the dancers chanting singly their own exploits, and jointly those of their ancestors.'†

'According to the ideas of the common people in South America,' says Humboldt, 'all that is necessary to happiness is bananos, salted fish, a hammock, and a guitar. The hope of gain is a weak stimulus under a zone where beneficent Nature provides to man a thousand means of procuring an easy and peaceful subsistence. ‡

'The Negro exists on his native soil in the most agreeable apathy, without even the fear of want, the chagrin of privation, the cares of ambition, or the ardour of desire.'§ At sunrise, these people form an assembly, and, as they are arranged in a circle consisting of thirty or forty, of all ages, pass their time in conversation. Their subjects are inexhaustible, and the amusement thus furnished is so attractive, that they separate with great reluctance, sometimes passing the entire day in talking, smoking, and diversion. 'Even towards evening, I often observed these coteries in the same place, and conducted with the same gaiety and spirit, the conversation being as animated as if it had just begun.'* The evenings are devoted to dancing; for, after the setting of the sun, every village resounds with songs and music, and 'I have often,' says Mr. Corry, 'listened to them with attention and pleasure during the tranquil evenings of the dry season.'† Here, then, in the easy life, and in the security as to the future resulting from it, which the Indian and the African, and other nations in similar circumstances, enjoy, is a mitigation of the evils to which they are subject, and a compensation for the inferior rank they hold in the great aggregate of human society.‡

Nor is the situation of the lowest of mankind unproductive of those circumstances which form character and constitute a state of discipline. 'There is no situation in which a rational being is placed, from that of the best instructed Christian down to the condition of the rudest barbarian, which affords not room for moral agency—for the acquisition, exercise, and display of voluntary qualities, good and bad. Health and sickness, enjoyment and suffering, riches and poverty, knowledge and ignorance, power and subjection, liberty and bondage, civilization and barbarity, have all their offices and duties. All serve for the formation of character; for, when we speak of a state of trial, it must be remembered, that characters are not only tried, or proved, or detected, but that they are generated also, and formed by circumstances. The best dispositions may subsist under the most depressed, the most afflictive fortunes. A West-Indian slave, who, with his wrongs, retains his benevolence, I for my part look upon as amongst the foremost of human characters for the rewards of virtue. The kind master of such a slave—that is, he who, in the exercise of an inordinate authority, postpones in any degree his own interest to his slave's comfort—is likewise a meritorious character; but still he is inferior to his slave. All, however, which I contend for, is, that these situations, opposite as they may be in every other view, are both *trials*, and equally such. The observation may be applied to every other condition—to the whole range of the scale, not excepting even its lowest extremity.'§

It may be proper, in concluding this survey

* Malcolm's Persia, vol. ii. p. 619.

† Ashe, of the Shawnese on the banks of the Ohio, vol. iii. p. 70;

‡ Humboldt, vol. iii. p. 92.

§ Golberry, vol. ii. p. 303.

* Golberry. Cook observes the same of the Friendly Islands, Third Voyage, vol. i.

† Corry on the Windward Coast, p. 153.

‡ See Records of the Creation, vol. ii. chap. vi., in which the evils of an uncivilized state are fully and satisfactorily considered.

§ Paley's Natural Theology, p. 528.

of the different classes of evil, to notice those evils of the social state which are supposed to result from what is termed the principle of population. The author of the Essay on Population, assuming the fact, that the human species doubles itself in the United States of America every twenty-five years, argues, that it must have an inherent tendency to this duplication, and that consequently it would thus double itself always and every where, were not the increase prevented by causes to which sufficient attention has not been paid. Further, he maintains, that, while a thousand millions of people are as easily doubled every twenty-five years, by the power of population, as a thousand, the food to support this vast increase can by no means be obtained with the same facility—that man is necessarily confined in room—that all the fertile land must soon be occupied—and, in short, that the ascertained law is, that population increases in geometrical, but subsistence in arithmetical progression.

The consequence is obvious. Suppose the average produce of the Island of Great Britain could be doubled in the first twenty-five years. In the next twenty-five years it is impossible to suppose it could be quadrupled. Suppose it, however, quadrupled. Call the population of the island eleven millions, and suppose the present produce equal to the easy support of such a number. In the first twenty-five years, the population would be twenty-two millions, and, the food being also doubled, the means of subsistence would be equal to this increase. In the next twenty-five years, the population would be forty-four millions, and the means of subsistence only equal to the support of thirty-three millions. In the next period, the population would be eighty-eight millions, and the means of subsistence just equal to the support of half that number. And, at the conclusion of the first century, the population would be one hundred and seventy-six millions, and the means of subsistence only equal to the support of fifty-five millions, leaving a population of one hundred and twenty-one millions totally unprovided for.

Moreover, it is contended, that the consequence of this principle is immediate—that, long before all the land in a country is brought under cultivation, or that which best repays the labour of the husbandman affords the utmost it is capable of producing—as soon, in fact, as the quantity of food actually raised is inadequate to the comfortable support of the number of persons actually existing—want, and its inseparable companions, vice and misery must appear—that, although by that law of nature, which renders food necessary to the life of man, population cannot actually increase beyond the lowest nourishment capable of supporting it, yet it may, and its constant tendency is, and, in point of fact, it always does increase, beyond the supply of food necessary to support it in ease and comfort; whence this hypothesis explains, why, in every country of which there is any record, excepting only amongst the first possessors of uncleared land, poverty prevails amongst some of its members; because, from a principle inherent in human nature, the tendency of the human race is to increase, till the population presses against the limit of the means of subsistence; so that in every country there will always be a greater number of persons than the actual and available supply of food can easily and comfortably nourish.

Into the controversy to whch these speculations have given origin, and which is still agitated, this is not the place to enter. It is necessary only to observe, that an *actual* increase of the human species, in a geometrical ratio, for any considerable period together, is impossible, and that this impossibility is distinctly admitted. The late advocates of the hypothesis of Mr. Malthus are anxious to disclaim all idea of an increase in any proportion that is strictly regular. But it is contended, that if it be conceded, that the increase at the assigned rate is not regular, the nature of the proposition is wholly changed; the geometrical ratio is given up, and all that can be said of the increase, however great and rapid, is, that there is a power in the human species to multiply its numbers greatly and rapidly.—Mr. Malthus says that population, when unchecked, goes on doubling itself every twenty-five years; that is, goes on increasing in the order of 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, &c. This, it is argued, is not possible, because the first term in the series does not at any fixed period with invariable certainty become two, the second term, nor does two at any fixed period with invariable certainty become three, nor three, four, and so on. That the quantity represented by these terms should, at the period stated in the proposition, with invariable certainty, be doubled, is plainly indispensable to the progression. The slightest alteration in that quantity must be fatal to the uniformity of the result; fatal, that is, to the geometrical progression. The proposition is, that the quantity represented by 1, say 10,000,000, in twenty-five years becomes 2, that is, 20,000,000—in fifty years, 4, that is, 40,000,000—in seventy-five years, 8, that is, 80,000,000—in one hundred years, 16, that is, 160,000,000—and so on. But if, in the precise period specified, this quantity be not invariably augmented in this precise ratio—if it be not so augmented in every successive period—if at one period the number remain stationary, at another increase, and at another diminish, there can be no proper geometrical progression.* Nothing, then, it is

*Since, indeed, the second generation possesses the power of increasing as fast as the first, and the third as fast as the second, and so on, the increase may not improperly be said to be of a *geometrical character;* and in this sense it may be of a geometrical character, without being in strict geometrical progression. The two propositions are by no means identical. If an increase, at a fixed rate, has never gone on with regularity beyond three or four periods, but the regularity of the progression has uniformly been interrupted,

contended, in human affairs, is certain, if it be not certain that the increase in the numbers of mankind is most irregular. Sometimes, for a certain period, say twenty-five years, there is an increase; that increase has never been known to proceed in the same proportion four periods together. Sometimes, for a certain period, there is a diminution; that diminution has never been known to proceed in the same proportion four periods together. Sometimes, for a certain period, the number is at a stand; the period during which it remains stationary is equally irregular. How, then, it is demanded, can numbers, which thus incessantly fluctuate, proceed in geometrical progression?

It will be answered, this reasoning is founded on the actual state of population, whereas the argument to which it is opposed has respect to the inherent power of population, and to the results of that power, supposing its operations were unchecked. It is replied, that it has been shown above, that according to the statement of Mr. Malthus himself, no state of society can be conceived, in which checks must not of necessity exist, and that, therefore, it is of the essence of this proposition, to suppose what in the nature of things is insupposable. But if the advocates of this hypothesis will be content to say, that there is an inherent power in population, constantly, rapidly, and greatly to increase, there will no longer remain any essential difference of opinion between them and their opponents.—It follows from some of Mr. Godwin's own statements,* that there is a power in the human species, under certain circumstances, rapidly to multiply its numbers; and, if the geometrical ratio be given up, this is all which Mr. Malthus himself can affirm. In the principle, that there is an inherent power of increase, they are agreed; they differ only according to the ratio of increase, which both must allow it is not possible to determine with exactness from any data we yet possess.—The one contends that the ratio of increase is extremely rapid—the other, that, though it may be occasionally rapid, it is generally slow; but, at all events, Mr. Godwin must admit the truth so constantly and earnestly inculcated by Mr. Malthus; for it follows, from the facts recognized by himself, no less than from the theory he opposes, namely, that prudential restraint is necessary, that without it indigence is inevitable, and that the consequence of the indigence must be vice and misery.

Without doubt, the final decision of this controversy will depend upon the facts that shall be ascertained, relative to the number of emigrants into America. The system of Mr. Malthus is founded upon the assumption, that the increase in America has been produced by procreation only. 'That increase has frequently been ascertained to be from procreation only,' is the proposition to which he constantly has recourse, and on which everything is made to rest. If this proposition shall be confirmed, his system is established; if it shall be refuted, it falls.

To a certain extent, indeed, some objection might still reasonably be made to his second main position, namely, that while population, if permitted to expand freely, would go on for ever to increase in geometrical progression, subsistence could not, by the wisest and best combination of human agency, be doubled faster than in arithmetical progression. In answer to this, it is urged, that civilization itself is founded on the principle, and depends upon the fact, that every man has the power of producing more than is necessary to his own subsistence—and that this alone is sufficient to prove, that, let mankind increase in whatever ratio they may, subsistence may be made to keep pace with it, *until the whole habitable globe shall have been cultivated in such a manner as actually to yield all that it is physically capable of yielding*—that, whatever be the ratio of increase among mankind, it is in the power of man to cause vegetables and animals, the food of man, to increase with equal rapidity up to the point just stated—that if the vegetable productions of the earth cannot be doubled in geometrical progression, there is not the shadow of a reason to believe that any thing in nature can, and that, in regard to animals, if they increase in the same sort of series as human beings, which there is no reason to doubt, there can be no want of subsistence, whatever be that series, for this increase is subsistence;—lastly, that the actual increase, whatever be its ratio, must necessarily be by infants, that consume little—that the demand for subsistence, therefore, at whatever rate the consumers multiply, must be gradual, and, consequently, that it must always be possible to raise the additional quantity which may be needed—*at least until the earth shall be physically capable of yielding no more than it actually produces.*

and always must be interrupted, by those circumstances which are denominated checks, in what real or practical sense can the increase be said to be in geometrical progression? What is gained by this mode of expression? Mr. Malthus himself affirms, that, 'in the *actual* state of every society which has come within our view the natural progress of population has been constantly and powerfully checked, and that no improved form of government, no plans of emigration, no benevolent institutions, and no degree or direction of national industry, can prevent the *continued action* of a great check to population, in some form or other.' *Essay on Population*, vol. iii. book iv. chap. i. pp. 63, 64, 5th edition. What, then, is the utility of saying that population, IF *unchecked*, would increase in geometrical progression, when it is thus expressly conceded, that population can never be without the continued action of a great check? Surely, without clouding the subject with the geometrical progression, it would be better to say that there is a constant tendency in population to a great and rapid increase—that population must always possess the inherent power of doubling its numbers as easily after the second and third, or after the hundredth or thousandth duplication, as after the first, but that this cannot possibly be the case *for ever* with subsistence.

*Mr. Godwin allows, that in Sweden there has been a doubling of the population, from procreation only, in little more than a hundred years.

From this account of the real state of the question, the following conclusions are deducible, for the sake of establishing which, the subject has been here adverted to.

I. In the first place, it is evident, that, even if the law of population be such as is stated by Mr. Malthus, it is not incompatible with the progressive improvement of man. It is commonly said that this hypothesis must degrade man in the estimation of man, because it represents him as too cheap, and that this low estimation of the value of a human being, this contempt of human nature, is fatal to human improvement, and is at the foundation of the enormous errors of statesmen, and the gigantic crimes of warriors—that they could not squander life and violate happiness as they do, did they judge of man as he is—that their estimation of him is universally acknowledged to have arisen from their own selfish and ill-regulated passions, but that to view him as the Essay on Population represents him, is to render him valueless in the eye of reason itself—to make philosophy enter into an alliance with tyranny against him—to snatch from science the shield she was wont to hold over him, and to cover with it his direst foes—error, corruption, and oppression.

But it may well be questioned, whether, on a sober and thorough consideration of the subject, there will appear to be any truth in this representation; for the dignity and worth of man must depend upon what he *is*, and it is not possible that any opinion respecting the rate at which he multiplies his species can affect our estimation of his nature, his faculties, and his capacity of improvement, for the plain reason, that these must remain just the same, whatever that rate may be.

Because man is endowed with the faculty of reason, can foresee the consequences of his actions, and regulate his conduct by a prudent regard to his well being, therefore it is in his power to derive from the law of population, supposing it to be such as has been stated, the most excellent advantages, and to prevent it from producing any evil whatever. Suppose the principle of population really is what Mr. Malthus, says it is—capable, in no long time, of peopling all the stars, and that, if it had gone on unchecked for eighteen hundred years, it would have produced men enough to fill the whole visible universe with human creatures, as thick as they could stand*—how easy, then, must it be, to people this vast desart, and to crowd with intelligent and happy creatures places over which for ages have been extended the line of desolation and the stone of emptiness! 'The quantity of happiness in any given district so far depends upon the number of inhabitants, that, in comparing adjoining periods in the same country, the collective happiness will be nearly in the exact proportion of the numbers; consequently, the decay of population is the greatest evil that a state can suffer, and the improvement of it is the object which ought in all countries to be aimed at, in preference to every other political purpose whatever.'*

Viewing, then, the vast proportion of the habitable globe which is at present without an inhabitant, and contemplating the immeasurable increase of human subsistence which it is allowed the earth might be made to yield, I should say, with the able opponent of Mr. Malthus, 'How delightful a speculation is it, that man is endowed by all-bountiful Nature with an unlimited power to multiply his species! I would look out upon the cheerless and melancholy world which at present is but a great desart, and imagine it all cultivated, all improved, all variegated, with a multitude of human beings in a state of illumination, of innocence, and of active benevolence, to which the progress of thought and the enlargement of mind seem naturally to lead, beyond any thing that has yet any where been realized. I would count up the acres and the square miles of the surface of the earth, and consider them all as the estate, in fee simple, of the human intellect. I would extend my view from China and England, countries already moderately, and but moderately peopled, to the plains of North America, of South America, of Africa, of many tracts of Asia, of the north of Europe, of Spain, and various other divisions of the prolific world. I should contemplate with delight the extensive emigrations which have taken place to North America, and plan and chalk out, as far as my capacity and endowments of study would permit me, similar emigrations to other parts of the world, that should finally make the whole earth at least as populous as China is at present.'†

Under a wise and upright administration of affairs, the power of multiplication in man, however extensive, might be rendered the source of an immeasurable increase of happiness over the face of the whole earth, and wisdom and integrity might prevent for ever those evil consequences which inevitably follow when that administration is without wisdom and integrity. Those consequences, therefore, ought in all justice to be referred, not to the principle of population, but to the institutions of society.‡ They do not disprove the wisdom

* Principles of Political Economy, p. 297.

* Paley's Moral and Political Economy, book vi. chap. xi.

† Godwin on Population, pp. 450, 451.

‡ By the institutions of society is here meant, not merely positive laws, but the customs, usages, and practical spirit which grow out of them. No direct institutions, it is true, can provide for all circumstances, or regulate all the passions; but those institutions may be so wisely adapted to the nature of man, as to insure to individuals knowledge, virtue, and happiness, and with knowledge, virtue, and happiness individuals can avert evils which it is certainly not in the power of any government to prevent. It does not admit of question, that, were the government of this country to expend but the tithe of what it does expend in war and in patronage, upon the institution and support of the wisest arrangements that might be devised, for the education of the children of the poor, (using the term education in the most comprehensive sense, as including not main-

and goodness of the Deity, in the appointment of the law, but they show the folly of man in the neglect of his true interest. The law itself is beneficent, because, as has been shown, it is capable of producing an immeasurable increase of happiness, and because it is in the power of man to render it wholly and for ever innoxious. He might render it innoxious, because he can obtain the mastery over the grosser impulses of appetite, and give to the higher faculties of his nature the government. By a wise arrangement of the circumstances in which he is placed at an early period, and trained to maturity, he might be made to see his own interest so clearly, and induced to pursue it so steadily, that it should not be possible for him to deviate from the course prescribed by an enlightened regard to his well being. This opinion is founded on the universally-admitted truth, that man is what the circumstances in which he is placed make him; and, resting my hope on this basis, I would say, even though the speculations of Mr. Malthus possess absolute truth and certainty, the advancement of man might nevertheless be as glorious as philosophy and benevolence have ever dreamed, and, for their efforts to promote that advancement, there will still be the greatest reason and the best encouragement.

II. In the second place, admitting the existence of the law of population, its appointment is not inconsistent with the divine benevolence. This must be obvious from what has been already advanced. The law of population, it has been clearly proved, is capable of producing an immeasurable increase of happiness. It has been shown, that it is in the power of man to prevent it from occasioning any evil whatever; any evil it actually produces, therefore, is not chargeable on the law, and cannot possibly bring into question the wisdom and goodness of him who appointed it.

But, even admitting that this law does produce some evil, which no wisdom can prevent, and no exertions mitigate—even supposing that it renders man in some respects a less noble and less happy creature than philosophy and benevolence have sometimes thought him, (concessions for which it would be extremely difficult to show the necessity,) even in this case, it would by no means involve the divine goodness in doubt, because man might be a less noble and happy creature than he has been judged to be, or than he actually is, without any impeachment of the wisdom and benignity of his Creator. In considerations of this sort, we can never too often recur to the sound maxim, that, of no condition, in which there is upon the whole a balance of enjoyment, can it with truth be said, that its appointment is not consistent with wisdom and goodness. Be the evils which would result from the operation of this law great as any one can imagine, still, every human being might, upon the whole, the whole of his existence considered, enjoy more than he suffers; nay, the balance of enjoyment even in the present state might be in his favour; and being so, no creature could require more. To all objections to this system, therefore, upon the *mere* ground of its inconsistency with the divine wisdom and goodness, this would be a sufficient answer. There may be objections, and insuperable objections to it on other grounds, but on this alone it cannot be overthrown.

A believer in this theory might assume higher ground. He might contend, that all the evils which actually result from such a constitution of man, and such a condition of society as that to which it leads, are designed by the Deity to produce ultimate good, and that a preponderance of good is the actual result even at present. If an inequality of condition be a state the most conducive to human happiness, because in this state the faculties of man are most completely developed, and his virtues most perfectly formed and most constantly exercised, then the principle of population, it might be argued, must be admitted to be highly beneficial, since it is the chief agent by which that inequality is rendered certain and inevitable. In a state of society in which every man's share of the conveniences and comforts of life depends upon himself—in which he must look wholly to his own conduct and character for the acquisition and preservation of wealth, and honour, and power, and fame—for whatever portion he obtains of the treasure of literature and science, and for whatever measure he enjoys of that refined and exalted pleasure which flows from an intercourse with the wise and good—in a state of society so constituted, the great incentives to human action, hope and fear, must be afforded with unfailing strength and unceasing constancy. And, accordingly, we do actually see, that to this hope and fear, this hope of rising and this fear of falling, is owing all that activity and enterprise, all that physical, intellectual, and moral exertion, which render society what it is, and which give us the best assurance of its future improvement. And the same condition of society must of necessity produce exactly that combination of circumstances which is calculated, in the best possible manner, to form and to prove the moral character of man. In this view, the principle we are considering assumes, in the opinion of its advocates, an importance which entitles it to rank with almost any ascertained law of the physical or moral world. It is the conclusion of all sound philosophy, it is the clear, express, and constantly-repeated doctrine of revelation, that the present is a state of discipline, in which it is intended by his Creator, that the human being should be prepared for

ly the acquisition of knowledge, but of industrious and virtuous habits,) were government sincerely and earnestly to endeavour thus to put into active operation all the knowledge, philanthropy, and religion, which would be delighted to aid it in planning and executing such arrangements, in two generations this country would possess a peasantry intelligent, industrious, virtuous, and happy, beyond what the world has ever yet witnessed, amongst which the terrible evils that prevail at present, and have so long prevailed, could not possibly exist.

a higher and happier state of existence. To fit it for this purpose, the present state must contain a certain mixture of good and evil, and whether good or evil happen, in general, to an individual, must depend upon certain conditions. Now it is contended by the advocates of this principles, that the circumstances in which it must of necessity place every moral agent are precisely those which are required by a state of discipline—that accordingly, this great law of human nature has every appearance of having been framed with a reference to this condition of the human being—that, in the first place, it bears upon it the stamp and character of a law, for it is strong and general, and, in the second place, that, in the whole range of the laws of nature, with which we are acquainted, there is not one which in so remarkable a manner coincides with and confirms this scriptural view of the state of man on earth; because there is not one which so admirably secures that combination of circumstances, out of which must ever arise hope and fear, love and hatred, joy and sorrow, wealth and poverty, benignity and malevolence—all the affections and all the passions, all the virtues and all the vices, and in the midst of which the character must not only be formed, but proved.

Whether this be really so, must be left to the individual judgment of enlightened and inquiring men; but such is the view which is exhibited in the Essay on Population, and this ought to be borne in mind. Many things have been said, both of that essay and of its author, which are neither just nor candid. Mr. Malthus appears to have written with the most benevolent intention, and it is difficult to conceive how any one can rise from the perusal of his work without a conviction, that he is sincerely and deeply anxious to lessen the prevalence of want and suffering, and to improve the condition of the poor. It is most unjustifiable to represent him as the advocate of vice and misery, because he endeavours to show that vice and misery must be produced by the operation of the law of population, unless these consequences are prevented by foresight and prudence. He may be wrong in assigning so rapid an increase to the human species as he does; he may have founded his law of population on circumstances insufficient to establish it; but still the main object of his work, that which he keeps constantly in view, and to which he incessantly recurs, is to point out how the pernicious consequences of this rapid increase, how the vice and misery which he thinks it naturally tends to produce, may be counteracted. That there is no other method of improving the condition of the poor, than that of rendering them more provident and more independent—that the consequence of imprudence must be indigence, and the consequence of indigence, vice and misery, are the obvious truths he inculcates—truths which no one can doubt, whatever be his opinions respecting the rate at which the numbers of mankind increase. And if, according to the geometrical ratio, these consequences follow with greater certainty, and to a greater extent, it is not the less true, that it is in the power of prudence and foresight to prevent them. And, if it be in the power of prudence and foresight to prevent them, that is all which is essential to the hope of the philanthropist, and to the justification of the appointment of the Creator.

There can be no doubt that the happiness, and even the existence, of millions of human beings depend upon the ultimate decision of this controversy. In the mean time, no one can form a just opinion concerning it, who does not study it with a calm and unprejudiced mind. It is the prevailing opinion, that the views of Mr. Malthus are hostile to the best exertions of benevolence, and involve the dispensations of the Deity in deep and inscrutable darkness. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, to enter somewhat into this subject, in an argument on the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, derived from the constitution of man and the frame of society. And it is no small satisfaction to perceive, that, be the law of population what it may, the benignity of the Creator, in the appointment of the constitution of man, of his capacity for improvement, and of the possibility of securing that improvement by the melioration of his condition, and the removal of many of the evils from which he at present suffers, remains much the same.—Indeed, however this controversy be determined, the great interests of man *must* remain the same; for, to advert again to an observation already made, to what, after all, does the difference between Mr. Malthus and those who are adverse to his hypothesis amount? Mr. Malthus says, that, under circumstances favourable to its increase, population goes on to double itself every twenty-five years, so long as those favourable circumstances continue; but he distinctly states, that these circumstances have never, in any age or country, actually continued but for very short periods. Mr. Godwin says, that in Sweden, (where many of the circumstances favourable to a rapid increase obviously do not exist,) population has doubled itself in the space of one hundred years; and he does not appear to doubt, that, were the circumstances which have enabled it so to double itself to continue, it would go on to increase at this rate. The one then affirms, that, under circumstances exceedingly favourable to population, it has doubled itself for some successive periods every twenty-five years—the other, that, under circumstances not peculiarly favourable to population, it has only doubled itself in the course of one hundred years. In the principle, that there is an inherent power in population to increase, they are agreed; the difference between them amounts to no more than this: the one affirms that population naturally tends to increase four times faster than the other says we have any proof from authentic records that it actually has increased for any considerable period. But, whichever opinion future investigation may establish, the difference surely is not of such magnitude, that it

may reasonably unsettle our convictions of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, in the constitution of human nature, and change our conceptions of the condition in which man must be content to live on the earth. Whether it be the law of his nature, to increase with the slowness for which Mr. Godwin contends, or with four times the rapidity, as Mr. Malthus maintains, his welfare is alike provided for; his most important interests are unaffected; his faculties and endowments are just the same, and it must be in the power of those faculties and endowments to enable him to live in equal competence and freedom, with equal virtue and happiness.

In whatever manner, then, this question respecting the principle of population be decided, we may rest with equal trust in the wisdom and goodness of the divine appointment, and anticipate with equal confidence the future advancement of mankind. And when we consider the improvements which have lately been made in some of the arts that essentially conduce to the comfort of life—the noble discoveries of science—the unexampled extension of education—the important knowledge which by its means is diffused, and is rapidly spreading among all classes of the people—the enlightened opinions which are beginning to prevail on those subjects which most deeply affect the present and future happiness of mankind, and on which the most inveterate prejudices and the most pernicious errors were formerly entertained—the daily increasing advantages connected with the press—that admirable invention, by which the improvements and discoveries of an individual are secured to the whole race, and to all ages—the rapid communication which is maintained, not only between the different parts of the same country, but between all the nations of the globe, and the increasing measure in which the advantages enjoyed by one are shared by all—in a word, the general and vast progress which society, notwithstanding its remaining evils, has unquestionably made, it is impossible not to indulge the brightest hopes of its future advancement, and with that advancement is inseparably connected the removal of many of the evils which have hitherto prevailed in the social state, and the mitigation of all. There is especially good reason to believe, that as it advances there will be a progressive improvement in the spirit in which the affairs of life will be conducted, and that, if it be too much to hope, that purely disinterested benevolence will become the master-spring of society, we may be at least assured that an enlightened self-love will be the governing principle of conduct. Men will at length perceive, that in pursuing their own advantage they must promote the welfare of their fellow-beings—that the selfishness which seeks its own gratification at the expense of another's happiness must defeat itself—that he only can obtain genuine success in the struggle of life, who acts on the principle, that it is an interchange of kind and liberal offices, who scorns to rise by attempting another's fall, and who can taste no sweetness in the bliss which is purchased by another's wo.—Each will still labour to promote his own individual advantage, but the competitors will be liberal and enlightened, and the contest will be generous. It will be philosopher contending with philosopher, patriot with patriot, and philanthropist with philanthropist. Without doubt, every commercial, political, scientific, and literary pursuit might be conducted in this spirit; for distinguished individuals, in each of these honourable professions, do actually exemplify this spirit even at present.

And, were the powerful offices of the state filled by such men, there would be a gradual abolition of those institutions which are hostile to freedom and happiness. True liberty would flourish. No ban would be fixed on the investigation of any subject of human inquiry. Error would not be allowed to lavish on its advocates the highest emoluments and honours of the state, nor truth to involve its friends in disgrace and penury. The expression of opinion would be free. Legislation would be restricted to conduct—not extended to opinion, and the tendency of every penal infliction would be to prevent the commission of crimes, and to reform the criminal—not first to corrupt, and then to exterminate. It is the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of patriotism, and the spirit of benevolence, which has rendered the state of society, amongst persons of liberal education in Great Britain, so immeasurably superior to that amongst the wretched inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, and it is not unreasonable to hope, that the same spirit may ultimately give to the inhabitants of Britain as great a superiority over their present condition, as their present condition is superior to that of the savage.

In the condition of the poorer class especially, it is possible to effect a most beneficial change. The capital evil under which they suffer, the great source of every other, is ignorance. It is melancholy to reflect on the profoundness of that ignorance. Those only whom philanthropy or piety has induced to mix with them, in order to ascertain their state, and to improve it, have any adequate conception of its extent. These benevolent persons know, and these alone really know, that, to unexercised minds, the whole creation, and all its wonders and beauties, are a blank—that of these unhappy people it is literally true, that they have eyes, but they see not, and understanding, but they perceive not—that the most magnificent appearances in nature produce on them no impression—that events the most momentous, affecting for ages the destiny of their whole race, excite in them no emotion—that subjects the most important, involving their own highest happiness for life and for immortality, create in them no interest—that the vacuity of their minds is all but absolute—that this absence of any thing that approximates to an intellectual conception, regards alike the most common circumstances out of the routine of their ordinary occupations, and

the truths which it concerns them most to know. Yet there is abundant evidence, that the minds of those in the lowest station might be awakened, their noblest faculties developed, and their highest improvement secured. They might be taught the value of the mind itself, and the importance of exercising and improving it. They might be taught the usefulness of knowledge, by being made to observe some of its most striking and advantageous applications to the purposes of life. They might be made acquainted with some of the more simple laws of nature, and with the true explanation of many of the phenomena depending upon them. That they should ever be able to understand the mysteries of science, or to comprehend her more profound investigations, it were vain to hope; but from the ease with which very young and unexpanded minds understand the rudiments of science, sufficiently to comprehend the principles on which many of the phenomena of nature depend, that excite our daily attention, and, when those principles are understood, our daily wonder and admiration, it is obviously possible to convey to the lowest of the people much of this knowledge, and thus to enable them to look on the world as an 'interpreted and intelligible volume,' instead of a total blank, and to understand the true order and beauty of nature, instead of acquiescing in the most contemptible accounts of phenomena which cannot altogether and at all times escape their notice. With the principle of many of the arts, and especially of those which are connected with their own calling, they might be made intimately acquainted; and experience has shown that their information might be extended, without disadvantage, to some knowledge of geography, of the solar system, of the history of their own country, and of the ancient world. With the fundamental principles of goverment, and the fundamental duties of governors and of the governed—with the essential principles of political economy—with those especially, by a regard to which, it is indispensable to their independence and comfort that they should regulate their own conduct, they might be made fully acquainted. With the great doctrines and duties of religion—with the attributes, dispensations, and government of the Supreme Being—with the true object and end of the present life—with the evidence that there is a future state of reward and punishment, of immortality and ever-increasing happiness to the virtuous, and of just retribution to the vicious—with the principal historical facts which establish the truth of Christianity, and the manner in which the simplicity, the sublimity, and the purity of its precepts prove its divine origin—with its undisputed doctrines, with its controverted doctrines, with the chief arguments employed to establish and to disprove each—with its holy precepts, and with the awful responsibility which so much light and such inestimable advantages attach to every reasonable creature—with all this, every individual in the lowest class of society might be made perfectly familiar. Is it possible to doubt that so much instruction might be communicated? Say that the distribution of labour shall remain for ever the same, as it is at present, and the time devoted to it the same, (which cannot be,) still let it be considered, what might be done in the years of childhood, during the period of youth, in the hours of the Sunday, and how much persons instructed to a certain extent may be fairly supposed capable of improving themselves in those hours of leisure which come to all. There is no reason to doubt that all which is here anticipated might be accomplished even by individual exertion; but, if the efforts of individuals were to receive that aid which they ought to receive—if that national energy which has been devoted to the purposes of a criminal ambition were directed to the improvement of the intellectual and moral condition of the people—what might not be effected?

'If a contemplative and religious man, looking back through one or two centuries, were enabled to take, with an adequate comprehension of intellect, the sum and value of so much of the astonishing course of the national exertions of this country, as the Supreme Judge has put to the criminal account of pride and ambition, and if he could then place, in contrast to the transactions on which that mighty amount has been expended, a sober estimate of what so much exerted vigour might have accomplished for the intellectual and moral exaltation of the people, it could not be without an emotion of horror that he would say, 'Who is to be accountable—who has been accountable for this difference?'*

There cannot be in the Christian world any such thing as a nation habitually absolved from the duty of raising its people from ignorance, in consideration of a necessity of expending its vigour in foreign enterprize. The concern of redeeming the people from a degraded condition is a duty at all events, and to an entire certainty—a duty imperative and absolute; but whether rulers and the ascendant classes will co-operate or not, individuals must persevere. And, at least for ages to come, it is to individual exertion we must look for every thing that is effectual in the promotion of this great work.

And let the promoters of education never forget, that, in every school they establish, they oblige a multitude of youthful spirits to direct their attention to something foreign to their wild amusements—that they force them to make a protracted, and in many instances a successful effort to think—that they enable them to acquire a command over what is invisible and immaterial—to rise from the mere animal state, to tread in the precincts of an intellectual economy, the economy of thought and truth, in which they are to live for ever. Let them remember, that a number of ideas, decidedly the most important that were ever formed in human thought, or imparted from the Supreme Mind, will be so taught in these institutions, that it is absolutely certain they will be fixed irrevocably and for ever on the

* Foster's Evils of Popular Ignorance.

minds of many of the pupils—that it will be as impossible to erase them from their memory, as to extinguish the stars—and in the case of many, perhaps the majority of these youthful beings, advancing into the temptations of life, these grand ideas, thus fixed deep in their souls, will distinctly present themselves to judgment and conscience an incalculable number of times. And what a number, if the sum of all these reminiscences, in all the minds now assembled in a numerous school, could be conjectured! But if one in a hundred of these recollections, if one in a thousand, shall have the efficacy that it ought to have, who can compute the amount of the good resulting from the instruction which shall have so enforced and fixed these ideas, that they shall infallibly be thus recollected? And, when these institutions shall have become universal—and they will become universal—they will operate in the intellectual, the moral, and the political condition of the people, a great and glorious change—the prospect of which, while it may well encourage the man of benevolence to devote his best powers and his best days to secure and hasten it, must satisfy him, that it is in man's own power, by wise and virtuous conduct, totally to remove the worst evils of the social state, and so to mitigate those which cannot be removed, as to render them light and inconsiderable.

When, then, a comprehensive view is taken of the provision which the Creator has made for human happiness—when it is considered, that, in innumerable instances, pleasure is annexed to the performance of the animal and vital functions, and the exercise of the mental and moral faculties, when no other reason can be assigned for it but the pure benevolence of him in whom we live, and move, and have our being—that the ordinary state of mankind is a state not of ease only, but of positive enjoyment, and that the season of pain and suffering is extraordinary, coming comparatively seldom, and lasting comparatively but a short period—that the natural and moral evils which prevail, though in themselves often-times great and terrible, are parts of the plan designed to form the character and to perfect the happiness of man—that the evils of the social state especially, though sometimes extremely calamitous, are, upon the whole, much less considerable than they appear, are accompanied with many mitigations, become less and less with every improvement which man works out for himself, and in the mean time accomplish some most useful purposes—when these considerations are fully weighed, they will be sufficient to satisfy the mind, that these evils are parts of a great whole, conspiring, under the direction of unerring wisdom, to the production of consummate happiness. Many things will still, indeed, remain a mystery to us; many things in nature, many things in Providence, many events disastrous to communities, many calamities befalling individuals. Of these we shall never be able to obtain a thorough comprehension in the present state, for the reason so often and so justly assigned, that in the present state we see only a part of the plan, and that, therefore, we cannot possibly have a clear understanding of the whole.

The vast plan of Providence, indeed, would not be what it is, would not be calculated for millions of creatures, and for eternity, if it presented no mysteries to us—if, with our present faculties, and in our present situations, we could comprehend the whole of it. That pain, therefore, in its various forms, is made the active and extensive agent that it is, in carrying on the great scheme—that it falls with such fearful severity on some devoted communities, on some wretched individuals—that it is sometimes the consequence of events which no wisdom can foresee nor prevent, and sometimes of diseases which no skill can guard against nor mitigate—that this should be totally beyond our present comprehension, is no more than must of necessity be, we being what we are, and the universe what it is. That it is adopted for wise and good reasons, is an unavoidable inference from what we know of the benignity of the Creator; that in many instances it promotes our happiness, we actually experience, since it is often the monitor of danger, the corrector of error, the punisher of vice, the incentive to exertions which issue in the production of immeasurable and exquisite pleasures. That it does not indicate the imperfection of the benevolence of him who appointed it, is certain; for, let it even be supposed that there really is in its appointment an apparent want of benevolence—of this apparent want of benevolence, two accounts may be given; it may arise either from the reality of the appearance, or from the ignorance, the confined views, and the disadvantageous situation of the observer for perceiving the whole plan of the Great Agent. 'It may be owing either to an actual want of goodness, or to the infinity and unfathomableness of it. The first of these accounts contradicts numberless phenomena of nature, is inconsistent with the perfection apparent in the general frame of the world, and opposes our most reasonable apprehensions concerning the nature and attributes of the First Cause. The latter account is in the highest degree easy, natural, and obvious. It is suggested to us by what we have experienced in similar instances, and agreeable to what, from the reason of the thing, we might have foreseen must have happened to such creatures as we are, in considering such a scheme as that of nature. Can we then doubt to which of these accounts we shall give the preference? Is it reasonable to suffer our conviction of a fact, for which we have good evidence, to be influenced by appearances which may as well be consistent as inconsistent with it—nay, by appearances which, on the supposition of its truth, we must beforehand have expected?'*

Let us, then, observe the exact state of the case. It can be proved, in the most satisfactory manner, that the Deity is good, because

* Four Dissertations, &c. By Richard Price. D. D., F. R. S., p. 105.

it can be proved that he has imparted pleasure where it can answer no other purpose than that of promoting the happiness of its recipient—that he has therefore rested in the production of happiness as an ultimate object. One such case is a demonstration of his goodness. On the other hand, it cannot be proved that pain is ever occasioned where no purpose is answered by it but the misery of the sufferer. Not a single example can be found in all nature, from which it can be concluded that pain is rested in as an ultimate object;* while numberless instances can be adduced, from which it can be demonstrated, that it is the means of producing good. The utmost which can be said on the opposite side is, that there are particular cases of such a nature—that we cannot explain *how* they will terminate in good. Even with respect to these, no one can show that they will end in evil, no one can render it probable; but the probability produced by all which we really know is altogether against the conclusion. Although we are ignorant of the exact means by which, in these cases, good is promoted, yet we are equally ignorant of the exact means by which a thousand other things are brought to pass, which we are certain happen; and at all events our ignorance of what we do not know cannot bring doubt upon what we do know; nor can we, without manifest absurdity, conclude that the Deity is not good, merely because we are ignorant of the mode in which, in particular cases, he chooses to accomplish the purposes of benevolence. Belief is founded upon evidence, not upon ignorance; but the notion, that the Deity is not perfectly good, is founded altogether upon our ignorance. Evidence is completely against it—evidence is wholly in favour of his perfect benignity—evidence amounting to absolute demonstration.

Thus we have entered into a particular consideration of the various classes of evil. We have seen that the appointment of it is consistent with infinite wisdom and goodness—that, while its actual amount is by no means so great as is commonly supposed, in every instance in which it does prevail, it produces a preponderance of good, and that it exists only for the sake of that greater good which it is the means of securing. We have seen, then, that the positive proof of the benevolence of the Creator is absolutely irresistible, and that the partial and temporary prevalence of evil, which alone can involve in doubt the perfection of his goodness, is not only not irreconcilable with it, but is as real an evidence of it, as the appointment of the sweetest pleasures of which he has permitted the heart to taste. The human faculties cannot be better employed than in investigating such subjects; and perhaps the review of them that has now been taken may tend to remove some doubts which may sometimes have perplexed and disturbed the mind, and to render its conviction of the most glorious and cheering of all truths more complete, more impressive, and more stable.

* 'No anatomist ever discovered a system of organization calculated to produce pain and disease; or, in explaining the parts of the human body, ever said, "This is to irritate—this to inflame."' —*Paley's Natural Theology*, p. 502.

SECTION IV.

Of the Design of God in the Creation.

Suppose, then, the Deity really possesses the attributes which we have endeavoured to show must belong to him; suppose that he is self-existent, independent, infinitely powerful, wise, and good, and that he determines to call into existence millions of beings endowed with such a capacity of happiness, and furnished with such faculties as distinguish man; what could induce in him such a determination? By the supposition, he is infinitely powerful, wise, and good; he must therefore be infinitely happy, because infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, must render him self-sufficient—must supply him, that is, with all the means of happiness, whatever they may be, and at the same time exclude every thing which is incompatible with perfect felicity.

Being, then, infinitely powerful, wise, good, and happy, the inquiry recurs, What could determine him to call into existence a world of sentient and reasonable creatures? Could it be weakness? That is impossible; for, by the supposition, he is infinitely wise, and therefore must act not only with some design, but with wise design. Could it be to occasion misery? That also is impossible; for, to suppose that a Being who is infinitely wise, good, and happy, can purpose the production of misery for its own sake, is a contradiction. What, then, could he design? It is impossible to suppose that he could have any other object in view than the bestowment of happiness—the communication to the creatures his wisdom might form, according to the capacities with which that wisdom might endow them, of a portion of his own felicity.

The happiness of his sentient and reasonable creatures, then, must be God's ultimate end in the creation. It is true, he is sometimes said to have executed this wonderful work in order to display his own glory; but the display of his glory and the happiness of his creatures are identical.

For the reason already assigned, he cannot have been induced to give existence to the vast universe in order to satisfy any want in himself, or to add any thing to his own happiness; because, being self-sufficient, he could have no want, and must always have been in himself completely happy. Nor is it possible that the creation should impart to him any thing which he did not originally possess; for all that it is, he made it, and all that it has, he gave it. All the beauty, excellence, and happiness, with which it is adorned, and in which it rejoices, it derives entirely from him; it cannot, therefore, communicate to him any thing which it did not receive from him. But without creation his attributes could have had no ex-

ercise. His wisdom could have been exerted in no wise contrivance—his power in producing no magnificent works—his goodness in communicating no happiness. There is in him transcendant beauty, inexhaustible excellence, immeasurable happiness. Of these, much is capable of communication. By giving being to sentient and intelligent creatures, he saw that he could impart without limit, that he could diffuse without measure, various degrees of these glorious perfections. A disposition thus to communicate himself is an original attribute of his nature; and being so, it is not more certain that he exists, than that he has communicated as high degrees of his perfections as are communicable, to as great a number of creatures as is possible, and that he has communicated them because they are good, that is, because they are happiness. It follows, that the purpose for which he gave being to intelligent creatures was, that he might communicate to them his own happiness.

Still he is sometimes said to have created the world for his own glory, or for his own sake, or to have made himself the ultimate object of his creation; and it is very important to observe what is really meant by this language. Strictly speaking, there is no excellence imparted to the creature, which is not a portion of his own perfection. For this reason, some persons choose to say that he engaged in the work of creation out of a regard to that perfection, since it was the determination to diffuse that perfection, which induced him to give existence to the creature—the creature without that perfection being nothing. Thus they say that the highest gifts of existence are knowledge, virtue, and happiness, but that the knowledge communicated is a portion of God's own infinite knowledge—that it is the same in nature, though infinitely less in degree, and that it consists primarily in a knowledge of himself, in a knowledge of his attributes as displayed in his works—that the same is true of virtue—that the virtue of the creature, in the degree in which it is real, is a participation of God's own moral excellence—that it consists in benevolence, in love to beings in general, and therefore primarily in love to God, who comprehends in himself all being, consequently, that God's own love of virtue is a love of himself; that is, a love of his own excellence; because in strictness there is no excellence in any creature—nothing which any intelligent being can love, that is not his, that is not derived from him, and in a manner a part of him; so that, in loving excellence, he must love himself. In like manner, that God's happiness consists in the exercise and enjoyment of his own attributes—that the creature's happiness in the highest sense consists in the name—in the exercise and enjoyment of attributes the same in nature, however different in degree, and with whatever imperfections mixed; in the exercise and enjoyment, for example, of wisdom, power, and goodness; that, therefore, in as much as there is no true excellence or happiness in the creature, which was not primarily in God, and which was not communicated from God, God must have had in the creation a supreme regard to himself; that is, to the communication of his own excellence and happiness, and have been influenced by a love of himself; that is, a love of his own excellence and happiness.

Now, admitting this representation to be just, still, according to it, the love of himself and the love of the creature are so far from being different or opposite, that they are the very same. His love of the creature is the love of himself, and his love of himself is the love of the creature.

There are persons who think that this view is highly calculated to elevate the mind to God, to lead it to attribute to him all that it is, and has, and hopes—to consider him as the only source of being and of beauty, of excellence and of happiness—to annihilate self and every object except the all-pervading, all-comprehending Author of the universe—to see him in every thing, and every thing in him—in the truest sense, to render God the great all in all, since, in the most real sense, it makes God the Fountain of all. For, according to this view, 'all the excellence of the creature is God's. The knowledge communicated is the knowledge of God, and the love communicated is the love of God, and the happiness communicated is joy in God. So that, in the creature's knowing, esteeming, loving, rejoicing in, and praising God, the glory of God is both exhibited and acknowledged; his fulness is received and returned. Here is both an emanation and remanation. The refulgence shines upon and into the creature, and is reflected back to the luminary. The beams of glory come from God, are something of God, and are refunded back again to their original. So that the whole is of God, and in God, and to God, and he is the beginning, and the middle, and the end.'*

Those who feel their conceptions of the Great Author of all things, the only proper agent in the universe, the first cause and the last end of his creatures, elevated by this manner of viewing this important subject, cannot be wrong in indulging it; but it requires considerable comprehensiveness of mind, and some power of abstract reasoning, and of carrying the thoughts above the imperfection and obscurity of language. For, in the language commonly employed on this subject, there is much that is calculated to mislead those who are not accustomed to clear thinking and close reasoning. It is important, then, to bear in mind, that all which is really meant is here stated. For God's creation of the world for his own glory does not signify that he created it in order to render himself more glorious, that being impossible, but to display the glory of his attributes to creatures capable of understanding it and of participating of it; and thus not only to make it known to myriads of admiring and adoring intelligences, but to communicate it to them. Hence he gives ex-

* Edwards' Dissertation concerning the End for which God created the World, chap. ii. sect. vii.

istence to rational beings, in order to render them glorious, by imparting to them his own glory; and he is said to do this out of a regard to his own glory, only because it is the communication of his own excellence that renders them glorious. They are glorious because they partake of the Creator's glory. The Creator gave them being for the purpose of communicating to them that glory; that glory consists in a participation of his own excellence, and therefore it is argued, strictly speaking, he gave them existence from a love of his own glory.* Whatever truth there may be in this representation, it is in fact only another method of saying that he is himself excellence and happiness; that, being so, he diffuses excellence and happiness, and that he diffuses them because he loves them. These views, properly understood, seem to lead to no other than just conceptions of the Supreme Being; but they are too refined to be in general accurately conceived and followed. The language commonly employed to express them is apt to confuse and mislead. As far as they are intelligible and clear, they coincide entirely with the more usual opinion, that God's ultimate end in the creation is the happiness of his creatures. This last proposition is universally intelligible and cannot be misunderstood; it is therefore the better mode of speaking. It is then a truth as obvious as it is delightful, that the design of the Creator must have been the communication of happiness, and that nothing can possibly more effectually display the glory of a Being who is infinitely wise, powerful, and good, than to contrive and effect the happiness of rational creatures.

SECTION V.

Of the Universality of the Divine Benevolence.

For the same reason that the Deity designed to make one human being happy, he must have purposed to bestow felicity ultimately upon all. For, if there be a single individual whom he created without this design, since he must still have had some design, it must be different from that which we have already shown to be the only one which he could have had in view.

In reality, his purpose with respect to every individual must have been either to make him happy or miserable. If it were not to make him happy, it must have been to make him miserable; but to suppose that he purposed to make any one miserable ultimately and upon the whole, is to suppose that he purposed the production of misery for its own sake, which has already been shown to be impossible.

And, if every principle of the human understanding revolt at the conclusion, that he is partial and capricious in his kindness, and has designed to make some individuals happy, and others miserable, it is equally opposed by all the appearances in nature. It is refuted by every object to which we can direct our attention. The sun, in the brightness of his glory, diffuses light and joy through all the nations of the earth. He has no favourite to bless. He regards not in his course the little distinctions which prevail among mankind. He shines not on the lands of the great, forgetting to pour his beams on the lowly spot of the peasant. He lights up the Indies with a burning glow—he smiles upon the nations of Europe with a milder beam, and he shines upon the hoary path of the Laplander, amidst his mountains of eternal snow. 'The Lord is good to all. He causes his sun to shine upon the evil and the good.'

The cloud, bearing in its bosom riches and fertility, pours its blessings upon every field, without regarding the name or rank of its owner. 'The Lord visiteth the earth with his goodness; he watereth it with the dew of heaven; he maketh it soft with showers; he blesseth the springing thereof.'

No where in nature are there traces of a partial God. Some inequalities indeed appear in the distribution of his bounty, but this must necessarily be the case, if creatures are formed with different capacities, and endowed with different degrees of excellence. There can be no degrees in excellence—there can be no variety of orders and ranks among intelligent beings, unless some are made higher and some lower, some better and some worse than others. But how low in capacity, how dark and gro-

* 'God seeking himself in the creation of the world, in the manner which has been supposed, is so far from being inconsistent with the good of his creatures, that it is a kind of regard to himself, that inclines him to seek the good of his creatures. It is a regard to himself that disposes him to diffuse and communicate himself. It is such a delight in his own internal fulness* and glory, that disposes him to an abundant effusion and emanation of that glory. The same disposition that inclines him to delight in his glory, causes him to delight in the exhibitions, expressions, and communications of it.

'In God, the love of himself and the love of the public are not to be distinguished as in man, because God's being, as it were, comprehends all. His existence being infinite, must be equivalent to universal existence. And, for the same reason that public affection in the creature is fit and beautiful, God's regard to himself must be so likewise. In God, the love of what is fit cannot be a distinct thing from the love of himself, because the love of God is that wherein all holiness primarily and chiefly consists, and God's own holiness must primarily consist in the love of himself.

'Love to virtue itself is no otherwise virtuous, than it is implied in, or arises from, love to the Divine Being. Consequently, God's own love to virtue is implied in love to himself, and is virtuous no otherwise than as it arises from love to himself. Consequently, whensoever he makes virtue his end, he makes himself his end. In fine, God being, as it were, an all-comprehending Being, all his moral perfections, his holiness, justice, grace, and benevolence, are some way or other to be rendered into a supreme and infinite regard to himself; and, if so, it will be easy to suppose that it becomes him to make himself his supreme and last end in his works.'—*Edwards' Dissertation concerning the End for which God created the World*, chap. i. sect. iv.

* In the above phrases, God's fulness, is comprehended all the good which is in God, natural and moral, either excellence or happiness.—*Edward's Dissertation*, chap. i. sect. ii.

velling in apprehension, how little capable of estimating the benignity of the author of its mercies, must be that mind which dreams that the Deity is partial, because, by diffusing every where a countless variety of capacity, excellence, and happiness, he has adopted the means of producing the greatest sum of enjoyment!

The great things which make us what we are, which minister to the primary wants, and which lie at the foundation of the happpiness of all animal and intelligent natures, are always and every where the same. Life itself is the same, wherever that wonderful power, which imparts to a mass of clay the amazing properties of sensation and intelligence, has operated. Wherever a vital fluid circulates, from the lowest animal up to the highest human being, it flows to diffuse enjoyment. To all, indeed, it does not impart an equal sum of happiness, because it could not do so, unless every object in nature were exactly alike; but to all it is the source of pleasure. Simple existence is a blessing; simply to be, is happiness. And this is the case with every race of animals, and with every individual of every race. The Deity has made no distinction in the *nature* of the existence which he has given to his creatures. He has not made the act of existing pleasureable in one and painful in another; he has made it the same in all, and in all he has made it happy. No reason can be assigned for this, but that he is good to all.

Every appearance of partiality vanishes from all his great and substantial gifts. It is only in what is justly termed the adventitous circumstances which attend his bounties, that the least indication of it can be supposed to exist; yet narrow minds confine their attention to these adventitious circumstances, and hence conclude that he is partial in the distribution of his goodness; while all his great and fundamental blessings are so universally and equally diffused, that they demonstrate him to be a Being of perfect benevolence. Now we ought to reason from the great to the little, not from the little to the great. We ought to say, Because, in every thing of primary importance, there is no appearance of partiality, therefore there can be really none, although in lesser things there is some inequality in the distribution of the absolute sum of enjoyment; not because there is some inequality in lesser things, therefore, there must be partiality, although there is no indication of it in any thing of real moment.

If to this consideration be added what has already been established, that even the most wretched of the human race enjoy a great preponderance of happiness, it will furnish another decisive proof, that the Deity designed to make all his creatures happy.

If we look inward on ourselves, and consider all the parts which minister to the perfection and happiness of our nature, whether animal or intellectual, we shall find a farther confirmation of this great truth. Did not one God fashion us? Has he given to any one of us more members than to another? Has he superadded to one, in the use of an organ, an exquisite degree of enjoyment, which he has denied to another? Are not all our organs the same, adapted to the same uses, and productive of the same gratifications? Has he not given to all the same number of senses, and made them the source of similar intelligence and pleasure?*

Indeed, no one can imagine, that in the formation and government of the world the Deity has been influenced by partiality, without entertaining the most low and puerile conceptions of his nature and conduct. When of one piece of clay he made an animal without reason, and of another a man, he felt no more partiality towards the clay which formed the man, than towards that of which he constructed the animal without reason. But he determined to impart enjoyment to an infinite variety of organized and sensitive creatures. It was necessary to the perfection of his plan, that there should be an animal without reason; it was necessary that there should be a man. He therefore gave to each the properties it possesses.

Now, while we suppose that he was not influenced by partiality, in the distinction which he has made between the different genera of creatures, shall we imagine, that when he proceeded to form the species, and still more the individuals, he on a sudden changed the principle of his conduct, and acted solely with a view to gratify a capricious fondness for one individual, and aversion to another—that classes and orders, those great lines of demarkation between different creatures, do not proceed from partiality, but that the slight shades of difference which distinguish individuals from individuals do? Can any conception be more puerile? Every blessing diffused over the creation, which is of great or permanent importance, is given, not to individuals, but to the species. This is the invariable law of nature.

But, while the universality of the divine benevolence will be readily admitted, with respect to the blessings which have been mentioned, many persons believe that the Deity acts upon a totally different principle, with regard to the distribution of moral and spiritual favour, and that he invariably confines the communication of this description of good to a few chosen individuals. The most popular systems of religion which prevail in the present age are founded upon this opinion. But if it be a fact, that there is no partiality in the primary and essential gift of existence, in life, considered as a whole, in the minor properties and felicities of our nature, in our senses, in our intellectual and moral faculties, and in the

* If those who are born blind or deaf, or are deprived of any sense by accident, should be considered exceptions to this general rule, it is still only the exception of one case in many thousands; and the loss, even where it does take place, is very generally compensated, in no inconsiderable degree, by the acuteness which the remaining senses acquire.

gratification of which they are respectively the source—if all these great blessings agree in this important circumstance, that they are instruments of enjoyment to all, and that the happiness they actually do impart is universal—it must follow, that there is no partiality in the distribution of moral and spiritual good. For why is this spiritual good imparted to any? Why is it superadded to the merely animal and intellectual nature of a single individual? It must be to perfect its possessor, and to make him susceptible of a greater sum of enjoyment.

We perceive, that, in addition to mere animal existence, man is endowed with organs which constitute him the most perfect of the creatures which inhabit the earth. Why were these organs given him? Without doubt that he might enjoy a higher degree of happiness than the creatures beneath him. To the organs which constitute him a mere (though a very perfect) animal, there are then superadded others which impart to him a rational and moral nature, with a view that he may enjoy a more perfect happiness; but besides all these, other properties are added, which exalt him still higher in the scale of creation—properties, for the reception of which, the former only qualify him—properties which make him capable of loving his Maker, and of enjoying him for ever. Why is he endowed with these? Certainly that he may enjoy a more perfect happiness than he could attain without them. Must not this reason then induce the Author of these invaluable blessings to bestow them upon the race as well as upon a few individuals?

Let the mind dwell for a moment upon what it is it really supposes, when it imagines that these properties are given to some and denied to others. The difference between the man who is capable of perceiving the excellence of the great and perfect Being who made him, of loving him, and of conforming to his character, and the man who not only is not endowed with this capacity, but is impelled by the principles of his nature to hate the Deity, is infinitely greater than the difference between a worm and the most exalted of the human race. For, if before the religious faculty begins to be developed, there appear no remarkable distinction between them, let them be observed after this principle has been called into action, and has operated for some time. It will then be seen, that in their conceptions, their occupations, and their enjoyments, they totally differ from each other—that they have hardly any thing in common—that there is as great a distinction between them, as between the insect which grovels in the dust, and the man who first measured the distances of the stars, and taught us the laws by which the universe is governed. Let the mind look forward to eternity, and suppose, (as always is supposed,) that both will progressively advance, each in his career, through the ages of an endless duration; how immeasurable does the distance between them then become!

Now the difference which is here supposed between two beings of the same species is never found to exist. There is nothing similar to it in the whole range of that part of the creation with which we are acquainted. Differences between individuals of the same species are observable, but there is nothing approaching the immensity of this inconceivable distinction. Whatever differences prevail are those of *degree*, not of *kind*. Every individual of the same species has every essential property the same as his fellows; but here a poperty infinitely more important in its consequences than the addition of a new sense would be, is given to one and denied to another. This looks not like the work of the Deity. It is a vast and sudden chasm in a plan of wondrous order, for which no preparation is made, to which we are led by no preparatory steps, for which nothing can account, and which nothing can reconcile. It bears upon it traces of the imperfect and short-sighted contrivance of man; it is contradicted by all which we feel and know of the works of God, and it ought to be driven from the mind of every rational being, that the fair creation of the Deity may no longer be falsified by the deceptive medium through which it is viewed, and that our Maker may not be charged with injustice because our eye is evil!

SECTION VI.

Of the Impossibility of Frustrating the Design of the Deity.

If the Deity created all men with a design to make them happy, their ultimate felicity is certain; for, if a being propose to himself the accomplishment of a design, he will perform it, unless some motive arise from within to induce him to change it, or some circumstance arise from without to oblige him to change it. Nothing can explain the failure of his purpose, unless it be supposed, either that he has voluntarily changed it, or has been forced by some superior power to abandon it.

If the Deity voluntarily change his plan, it must be for the better or for the worse. If for the better, the original plan must have been imperfect; if for the worse, since he knows all things perfectly, and must therefore foresee the consequence, it follows, that what he perceives to be a good plan is relinquished for one which he knows to be bad; but the supposition, that a wise and good Being can thus act, is impossible.

If, on the contrary, he has been forced to change his plan, that which obliged him to do so must be stronger than he; for no being will permit his design to be frustrated by a power which is weaker than himself. Whatever, therefore, it be, which frustrates the design of the Deity, must be stronger than omnipotence, which is a contradiction.

In a word, God is a Being of perfect goodness. He created man with a design to make

him happy.* There is nothing in the universe capable of frustrating his design. However, therefore, that design be opposed—through whatever long or painful discipline man may be conducted to happiness, he must finally attain it.

It does not seem possible to avoid this conclusion, but by saying that the Deity possesses other attributes, which are of a nature *contrary* to that upon which the whole of this reasoning is founded; and in fact this is affirmed. To all the arguments in favour of the final happiness of mankind, deduced from the goodness of God, it is replied, that God is a Sovereign, and can do what he pleases; that he is just, and must maintain the rights of his law; that he is holy, and must punish sin. All these positions are strictly true; but it is difficult to conceive how they can oppose the conclusions which are deduced from his goodness. They cannot possibly do so, unless the attributes of sovereignty, justice, and holiness, are contrary to goodness, and this is what is really affirmed. These perfections are conceived to be tremendous attributes, which are different from and opposite to goodness. It would seem like trifling, to confute this opinion, and to show that they can be only modifications of benevolence; yet it is necessary to prove it, and this is attempted in another part of this work. At present it may be sufficient to show, in general, that a Being of perfect goodness can possess no attribute which is inconsistent with that perfection.

SECTION VII.

Of the Harmony of the Divine Perfections.

A Being of perfect goodness can possess no attribute which is inconsistent with that perfection; for whatever is inconsistent with goodness is evil, and to affirm that a Being may be perfectly good, while he possesses a single attribute which is contrary to goodness, is to say that he may be perfectly good at the same time that he is evil.

Since whatever is inconsistent with goodness is evil—since it has been proved, that all evil has its origin in want or weakness—since it is universally acknowledged, that God is almighty, and therefore can have no want nor weakness, it follows, that he can possess no attribute which is inconsistent with benevolence.

We have only to determine the nature of an attribute, to decide whether or not it can belong to the Deity. If an attribute be evil, it certainly cannot belong to God. Now the attribute, whatever it be, which inflicts endless misery on any being, is evil. It is not affirmed merely that the atribute is evil which inflicts endless misery on the great majority of men, but that attribute is so which inflicts it even upon one single individual; and the proof is obvious.

Misery, considered in itself, is evil. Misery is only another word which is used to express pain of some kind or other. Pain, considered simply in itself, is universally admitted to be evil. Whatever produces pain, without doing any thing else, is evil.

Is all pain, then, evil? No. Why? Because some pain has an ulterior object, which is the production of good. Hunger, for example, is attended with pain, but this pain is not evil, because it has an ulterior object. Its design is not to inflict suffering, but to preserve life by inducing the animal to take food. In proportion, therefore, as life is a good to the animal, the pain which excites him to use the means of preserving it is a good.

Now all pain which has not this ulterior object, being pure and simple pain, pain and nothing else, is evil. But misery inflicted through endless ages cannot possibly accomplish this ulterior object, since there is no period in which it can effect it; such misery must be evil, therefore, in the highest possible degree.

It will avail nothing, to say that the object of the infliction of endless misery is not pain, but the satisfaction of immutable justice. This does not in the least affect the argument; for the position is, that that attribute, whatever it may be called, is evil, which inflicts misery upon a being, without doing and without designing to do any thing else to him. To that being it is pure, positive, absolute evil. Whatever makes a being more miserable than happy, the whole of his existence considered, is to him positive evil. A good being must cause to every creature an excess of pleasure above pain, for he is good to it only in proportion as he does so. But, according to the doctrine of endless punishment, God does not cause to the great majority of his creatures an excess of pleasure above pain; for he deprives them, through the whole of their future existence, of every pleasurable sensation, and inflicts upon them the most unremitted and intolerable anguish.

It is usual to represent the future punishment of the wicked in the following manner: suppose a large mountain, composed of the minutest grains of sand; suppose one of these grains to be removed once in a million of years—the length of time which would elapse before the removal of the last of these grains infinitely surpasses our power of conception. Yet this period, immeasurable as it is, is not endless, and therefore can convey to the mind but a faint idea of the duration of the torments of the wicked. We must suppose the globe itself to be composed of grains of sand—nay,

* It is nothing to say that the happiness intended to be bestowed upon his creatures by the Deity is conditional. There can be no doubt that it is so far conditional, that no being can be happy until he becomes virtuous. But the circumstances in which men are placed, and the ultimate effect of those circumstances upon their character, were clearly foreseen by the Deity; and if he perceived that any individual, under any particular combination of circumstances, would never become virtuous, he would either have altered his circumstances, or not have called him into existence. One or other of these measures benevolence required.

all the planets of our system, and all the stars which we behold in the heavens; we must suppose the particles which compose these immense and innumerable bodies formed into one vast mass, to be removed by the transposition of a single grain once in a million of years—how inconceivable the period that must elapse before the removal of the last grain! The faculties of the human mind are lost in the contemplation of it. Yet this period is not endless, and it has been often said, that could the wicked be told, that at the termination of such a period their sufferings would cease, the tidings would fill them with inconceivable transport. But they are not permitted to indulge even this forlorn and awful hope. When this dreadful period shall have elapsed, their sufferings will be but beginning; nay, when millions of such periods shall have passed away, their torment will be no nearer its termination, than at the instant of its commencement. And these sufferings are represented as most dreadful in their nature. No imagination, it is said, can conceive of their horror. No sensation of pleasure can ever again be felt by the soul, but through endless ages it must continue inconceivably miserable, without the intermission of a single instant, and without any hope of it. And this misery is inflicted for the crimes of eighty, twenty, ten years—inflicted upon the great majority of mankind—inflicted by a Being whose nature is supremely benevolent, and whose tender mercies are at all times over all his works!*

Such is the doctrine of endless misery. Can any one seriously believe it? Can any human being consider what God is, and what endless misery implies, and affirm that he really thinks the infliction of the one consistent with the perfections of the other?

*I profess myself utterly unable, by any language at my command, to convey an adequate conception of the ideas which are in the minds of the advocates of this doctrine. Let one of the most respected of these advocates perform the task himself: "Be entreated," says Edwards, in his 'Discourse on the Eternity of Hell Torments,' p. 28, &c., to consider attentively how great and awful a thing ETERNITY is! Although you cannot comprehend it the more by considering, yet you may be made more sensible that it is not a thing to be disregarded. Do but consider what it is to suffer extreme pain for ever and ever—to suffer it day and night, from one day to another, from one year to another, from one age to another, from one thousand ages to another, and so adding age to age, and thousands to thousands, in pain, in wailing and lamenting, groaning and shrieking, and gnashing your teeth—with your souls full of dreadful grief and amazement, with your bodies, and every member of them, full of racking torture—without any possibility of getting ease—without any possibility of moving God to pity your cries—without any possibility of hiding yourself from him—without any possibility of diverting your thoughts from your pain—without any possibility of obtaining any manner of mitigation, or help, or change for the better!—How dismal will it be, when you are under these racking torments, to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them! to have no hope—when you shall wish that you might be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it—when you shall wish that you might be turned into a toad, or a serpent, but shall have no hope of it—when you would rejoice if you might but have any relief, after you shall have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it—when, after you have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars, in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest day or night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of being delivered—when, after you shall have worn out a thousand more such ages, yet you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are no one whit nearer to the end of your torments—that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend for ever and ever, and that your souls, which shall have been agitated with the wrath of God all this while, yet will still exist to bear more wrath—your bodies, which shall have been burning all this while in these glowing flames, yet shall not have been consumed, but will remain through an eternity yet, which shall not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past!"

In the next page he adds, "Besides, their capacity (that of the wicked) will probably be enlarged, their understandings will be quicker and stronger in a future state; and God can give them as great a sense, and as strong an impression of eternity as he pleases, to increase their grief and torment."

What a tremendous, what a savage thought! What a thing is system! To think that a man, possessing a heart of flesh, and an understanding enlightened by the Christian religion, can steadily contemplate such a scene as this, and imagine it is a just exhibition of the conduct of the Author of this beautiful and happy world! Such conduct is worthy of the mind that plotted the inquisition, and of the heart that first leaped in exultation at the device of consuming the body in the flaming faggot for the the good of the soul; but to impute it to the pure, and lovely, and benignant Spirit that presides over the universe—language cannot speak the horror that is in it.

While feeling as I do, the utter inability of language to express the deep reprobation with which such representations ought to be regarded by all Christians, I should think myself deficient both in candor and justice, were I to omit to state a truth of which there is abundant evidence, and of which I rejoice to perceive that the evidence is increasing, namely, that in the present age many persons who believe in the doctrine of endless misery shrink with unfeigned horror from such exhibitions of it. Many excellent and pious persons, some of whom I have the pleasure of knowing, though they cannot satisfy themselves that the terms in which the scriptures speak of the endless suffering of the wicked import less than an endless duration, and though they profess themselves unable to see any injustice in the infliction of an endless punishment, yet believe that the degree of suffering actually imposed will not exceed that which is perfectly consistent with infinite benevolence. What that degree is, they do not presume to determine. On this awful subject, they are content to take the language of scripture as they find it, and wish uniformly to adhere to that language, satisfied that, whatever be the degree and the duration of the misery really threatened, the Judge of all the earth must do right. While, therefore, their wishes incline them to milder views of the divine inflictions, they highly disapprove of such representations of them as those that have been cited, which they think, if considered and believed, must fill the mind with too much terror, to exert, a reasonable and steady influence over it, and, if not considered and believed, can be of no service.

All the weight of the preceding reasoning, all the obstacles which it opposes to the belief that such can be the end of the greater part of the rational world, created by an infinitely wise, powerful, and good Being, may be applied against the doctrine, that the wicked will be raised from the dead, made to suffer great bodily anguish, and then blotted out of existence forever. Against the doctrine of endless punishment, it seems decisive; against the doctrine of limited punishment terminated by destruction, it applies with great, though not with equal force; for, while the first opinion teaches that he acts altogether contrary to goodness, the second represents him as not acting up to what sober and unpresuming reason seems to indicate the full measure of it.

In a word, if God be really a Being of perfect goodness, who can at no time act without the most benevolent design—if, when he created man, he intended that he should be pure and happy, and if there be nothing in the universe capable of frustrating his purpose, both the doctrine of endless misery, and that of limited punishment terminated by destruction, appear to be attended with insuperable difficulties. But if, on the other hand, the sin, which at present prevails, and the punishment which in future will be inflicted upon it, be the means employed by the Deity to accomplish his benevolent purpose—if the state of discipline in which he will place his erring creatures be so wisely adapted to their mental and moral disorder, as to oblige them to perceive, and feel, and hate, the folly of which they have been guilty, to excite in them a deep sorrow for it, and a real love of goodness—and if, when thus fitted for pure enjoyment, he mercifully permits them to participate of it, every difficulty vanishes, every thing is consistent, every thing is glorious, every counsel is benevolent, and every perfection harmonizes with the event. His justice, his holiness, his wisdom, his power, his goodness, will have been exerted, and exerted successfully, to bring about a result truly exalted and glorious. Then, indeed, may the universal acclamation of praise burst from his intelligent creation—*Allelujia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!*

CHAPTER II.

OF THE ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, FROM THE NATURE OF MAN.

A SKILFUL artificer, in constructing a piece of machinery, modifies and combines its various parts so as to make them subservient to a particular purpose, and we estimate the perfection of the mechanism by the completeness with which every thing is included necessary to secure the intended result, and every thing avoided which may impede it. In the external frame of man, there is the most exquisite adaptation of different parts to each other; the most beautiful results are designed and accomplished by contrivances, at one time extremely simple, at another wonderfully complicated, but at all times perfectly wise and efficient. The external frame of man, however, is only a part, and a very inferior part, of this wonderful microcosm; and, since such inimitable skill has been exerted in the construction of it, we must conclude that the *whole nature* of man is designed to answer some purpose, and, if it be right to judge of the importance of the object by the magnitude of the means employed to secure it, a purpose truly excellent.

If we examine the higher faculties with which man is endowed, and judge of the purpose for which they are imparted, by that to which they are adapted, we cannot mistake the ends they are designed to answer. All the nobler properties by which he is distinguished may be arranged, with sufficient accuracy for the present purpose, under intellectual powers, and his social and moral tendencies. He can observe the beauty and order of the world in which he is placed; he can investigate the causes of its phenomena; he can ascertain the laws by which it is governed; he can penetrate into the secret recesses of nature, and contemplate the process by which many of the wonders which surround him are formed; he can extend his view beyond the boundaries of his own world, calculate the distances of the worlds above him, ascertain their magnitude, and trace their movements. He can perform a still more difficult task. He can retire into himself, investigate the principles and propensities of his own nature, and reason respecting the very faculties by which he conducts the astonishing process of thought. Endowed with affections which lead him out of himself, and attach him to his fellow-beings, he can rejoice in their joy, and weep for their woe; he feels bound to them by tender and endearing ties; without their society, he is gloomy and sad; so long as he cherishes the generous affections in his intercourse with them, cheerfulness smiles upon his features, and happiness dilates his heart. He can sit in judgment on the nature of his own conduct, distinguish between good and evil, and, while he glows with admiration at the contemplation of every generous and sublime affection, he feels indignation and disgust at the selfishness which considers only its own good, and the vice which pursues it at the expense of the general happiness. He can hold intercourse with the Great Being who gave him existence, and who crowns him with good; and, though a mysterious veil, which he cannot pierce, shroud the Sovereign Spirit from his mortal vision, yet he can feel a solemn and endearing consciousness, that he is continually present with him—that he is above him, and beneath him, and around him; he can hear his voice instructing him in his duty, and perceive his hand directing him in his course, and rejoice in his promise, that he shall re-awake from the sleep of death, burst the fetters of the tomb, enjoy immortal youth, and pursue with unwearied step, through the countless ages of eternity, attainments which

rise higher and higher in infinite progression, and which perpetually fill and enlarge his capacity. Forgetting the enjoyments of the present life, which is but as a moment of time, compared with eternal duration, he is capable of acting with a view to his immortal dignity and happiness, and of resigning all which he now holds dear and valuable, if necessary, to promote his future felicity.

For what can a being thus wonderfully endowed be called into existence? For what are such faculties given him? To be for ever misdirected and abused—to be wasted on littleness, and devoted to folly—to adorn and secure the triumph of evil, and to afford to the universe an eternal spectacle of majestic desolation, and fallen and perverted grandeur? Or to add to the beauty of the fair creation, by proving that one principle pervades it—that one almighty power directs its operation—that in the higher, as well as in the lower part of the works of God, nothing is made in vain—that the means are universally adapted to the end, and the end invariably secured by the means?

If this be not the case, how singular is it, that man should furnish the only instance in the creation, of a complicated adaptation of means which answer no end, or rather of an admirable and exalted provision, entirely perverted from its purpose! If we examine any other part of the world—if we look beneath us or above us, we can perceive nothing analogous to it. All the inferior animals fulfil the object of their creation; they take no thought of tomorrow; they look not before nor after; the sun shines upon them, they bask in its beams, and are content; the verdant surface of the earth presents them with a rich repast; they eat, they lie down to rest, they rise with the morning's dawn, pursuing from day to day the same unvarying round, and happy without knowing or desiring to know more. Those exalted intelligences of which we are accustomed to conceive as forming the highest orders of creation, and fulfilling the highest counsels of the Sovereign Spirit, however sublime their capacities, and illimitable their desires, are filled with that adorable object which they continually contemplate and serve. Why, then, is man the only creature in the universe, who possesses a nature which falsifies every appearance, and disappoints every expectation—a capacity which enables him to soar with the seraph, and a destiny which levels him with the brute?

The few attainments which he at present makes should by no means render it incredible, that his distant and advanced progress will be thus sublime; for those attainments, inconsiderable as they are, afford an animating assurance of his ultimate perfection. They form the commencement of a course, which, as it is to continue through an interminable series of ages, so it must promote an illimitable improvement. They *may* terminate, it is obvious, in a perfection of knowledge and happiness, as great as the imagination can conceive; for, in order to do so, they require no change in their nature, but only an increase in their degree. The very acquisitions which an enlightened and virtuous man has already made, carried on to their possible extent, may place him at a point as high in the scale of creation, as that which the first-born seraph at present occupies. Nor does what we know of his past oppose what we thus augur of his future progress. Who, that saw Newton when an infant, leaning on his mother's bosom, and had never witnessed an instance of a similar progress, would have believed that that little and fatuous creature would, in the short space of a few years, be able to measure the distances of the stars, and to teach to a listening world the laws which regulate their mighty movements? The attainments of such a being, in his progress from infancy to manhood, are infinitely more wonderful than any which we suppose him afterwards to make; for in the one case it is an astonishing progress commencing from nothing; in the other, it is only the continuance of a course already greatly advanced; so that it is not even so incredible, that a man should arrive at the attainments of an angel, as that an infant should gain the acquisitions of a man.

Neither ought any present neglect or perversion of his powers to bring doubt upon the conclusion, that his ultimate destiny will be thus sublime; for a temporary and partial obstruction to his progress may be finally beneficial, and it is evidently the design of his Creator to lead him on to perfection by slow degrees, and from a low origin. At all events, it is certain that every human being possesses a capacity for this illimitable improvement, and that, if the great majority of mankind are to continue forever ignorant, vicious and miserable, this capacity, unlike any thing else in the creation, is given in vain.

And, however great and lamentable the present errors and imperfections of mankind may be, yet it is obvious that they have made, and that they are making, a gradual advancement towards a better state. Already they have gained much, and what they have acquired they will retain. Never was their knowledge so varied and extensive as it is at present; never were they in such favourable circumstances for enlarging and perfecting their acquisitions. In many instances we at present recognize such a liberality of thinking among the common people, as would have been sought in vain, a few years ago, in the most enlightened philosophers; and the youth now commences his career where the aged used to terminate their course. It is impossible to foresee where this will end, it impossible to predict the extent to which this improvement may be carried, or the influence it may have in diffusing an enlightened and comprehensive view of what is wise and just in conduct, in checking the indulgence of gross selfishness, in controlling the turbulent and eradicating the malignant passions, and in forming virtuous and benevolent habits.

But, even though all this should be a dream, and we should be obliged to admit the melancholy conclusion, that error and misery are

connected by an indissoluble bond with the present state, and that the experience of the past, and the discoveries of the future, will avail nothing, to deliver mankind from their influence—yet, if there be a hereafter, surely it is more reasonable to conclude, that these disorders will cease then, that the discipline under which the mind will be placed in this new state of being will correct, not increase its perversion, and that, instructed by experience, and purified by suffering, it will at length see things as they are, and estimate them as it ought, affording to its faculties their proper exercise, and to its affections their proper objects, than that its errors will continue through endless ages, or till they have effected its utter destruction.

To all this reasoning, however, which should seem no less solid than cheering, it has been objected, that the fundamental principle upon which it is founded is not just—that the strict connexion which it supposes between the purpose and the event does not invariably happen—that there are in nature adaptions which do not always secure the intended result, designs which are not completed, and that, in fact, there are many cases in which the object of nature is evidently and completely defeated—that every blossom, for example, does not ripen into fruit, nor every embryo attain the maturity of which it is capable, and for which it was obviously designed—that in every instance of this kind there is as great a failure of the design of the Deity, as can well be imagined, and that as this is not supposed to be inconsistent with his perfections, so there may be the same apparent frustration of his plan with regard to human beings, without any impeachment of his wisdom or goodness.

To this objection, which is much more ingenious than solid, two answers may be given. In the first place it may be replied, that though all analogical reasoning is founded upon a comparison of the lower with the higher parts of creation, and of the higher with the lower, yet this objection supposes that comparison to be carried farther than it can justly be extended, namely, to the final destiny of creatures of different orders. Because a being of an inferior order terminates its existence at a certain period, and with certain phenomena, we cannot conclude that a being of a superior order will do the same. A striking conformity between a particular organization in a fly and a man may lead to the conclusion, that that organization is designed to answer a similar purpose in both. This deduction from analogy is fair and conclusive. But if, because at a certain period this insect changes its state, and thereby looses forever its conscious existence, it be inferred, that a change of state in man, in many respects similar, is also attended with a final loss of conscious existence, this deduction from analogy is not fair and conclusive; because there may be something in the nature of a being possessing the faculties of a man, to prevent that change from being final, which does not exist in an insect possessing only the properties of a fly. Being already distinguished from the fly by the faculty of reason, he may possess this other distinctive property of surviving his apparent dissolution; or their common Creator may have something in view, by appointing the change in the one which he may not have in the other. The analogy to this extent, therefore, does not hold; but to this extent the objection under consideration supposes it to hold; for it supposes that human beings may be prematurely destroyed, because the rudiments of an insect or vegetable are so. It is therefore a false analogy.

Another very important view may be taken of this subject. Nothing is more evident, than that, in many instances, the inferior part of the creation is made chiefly, if not entirely, for the use of the superior. The vegetable world is formed for the animal, and in like manner to minister to the convenience and comfort of the higher, appears in many cases to be the final cause of the existence of the lower orders of the animal creation; and, supposing these lower orders to be at the same time happy, as far as they are capable of being so, (which is always the case,) this is a plan of admirable wisdom and beauty. Supposing, for example, it were wise and good in the Deity, to give to the superior animals of our globe their present constitution—a constitution, that is, to the support of which, many of the fruits of the earth, and many of the inferior animals, are necessary—then it is an instance of wisdom and goodness, to make such a provision, that these fruits and animals shall always sufficiently abound; for, were they from any cause to fail, the most disastrous consequences must ensue to those higher orders, for which chiefly the inferior exist. Now the only way by which it seems possible, by a general law, (and we have seen that it is by general laws that the Deity executes the purposes of his government,) to guard against such a calamity, is to provide in every period more of these inferior beings than is absolutely necessary at any; and there will appear the greater wisdom in this appointment, when it is considered, that beauty and enjoyment will be multiplied by it in the exact degree in which the superabundance may prevail. For this care, therefore, to provide for possible as well as actual existence, we see the most benevolent reason; so that, though every blossom do not ripen into fruit, nor every embryo develope its latent faculties, this is so far from being a proof of the frustration of the plan of the Deity, that it is directly the reverse, since this superabundant provision is the very means he has adopted to secure his purpose. These blossoms and embryos, though they perish, fulfil the design of their creation. Had they been necessary, they were ready to ripen into maturity, to supply the want which might exist; but, not being needed, they read an instructive lesson to the intelligent creation, saying to it, 'Behold the never-failing care of your Creator, to secure your happiness!' and then are seen no more.

In the second place, when, from the failure of the blossom, and the destruction of the embryo, it is urged, that there may be a similar loss in regard to human beings, it may be replied, that there is really no sort of parallel between the two cases. Every blossom, it is true, does not ripen into its proper fruit, nor every embryo grow into a perfect animal; yet neither is any blossom or embryo *perverted* from its genuine nature, into one which is opposite. Every blossom of an apple does not ultimately form an apple, but neither does it become a poisonous fruit. Every embryo does not grow into a perfect animal, but neither does it degenerate into a disgusting monster. But the doctrine which teaches that man was created for purity and happiness, but that he will continue forever vicious and miserable, and that which teaches that he will remain so for unknown ages, and then be destroyed, not only supposes that he does not attain his proper nature, but that it becomes perverted into that which is directly opposite. It supposes what never takes place, what is not only not supported by any analogy of nature, but what all analogy contradicts? it supposes a change infinitely greater than would happen, were the blossom of an apple to fail in forming an apple, and ripen into the hemlock, or the embryo of a lamb, instead of producing the most innoxious of animals, to grow into an adder. Nothing like this ever takes place in any of the works of God with which we are acquainted. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that it will not occur in his highest and noblest. Were this example adduced to show that the same *kind* of failure might take place among human beings—that those human embryos, for instance, which never see the light, and those infants which die before the developement of their faculties, perish, there would thus far be some analogy between the two cases, and that which happened to the one might, with some show of reason, be supposed to befall the other; but, for the reasons assigned in the first answer to this objection, the conclusion would not be valid even thus far; and farther than this it could not possibly go. To argue from it, that man, whose nature fits him for the attainments of an angel, not only falls short of these acquisitions, but degenerates into a malignant spirit, is altogether gratuitous. There is no analogy between the one case and the other.

In a word, both the doctrine which teaches that man will go on to sin and suffer for ever, and that which maintains that he will do so for unknown ages, and then be destroyed, must be founded either upon the principle that the Deity, when offended, is not to be appeased, or that man, when he has departed from the path of rectitude, is not to be reclaimed. No one will venture to maintain that the Deity is unappeasable; and to suppose that he is unable to reclaim his offending offspring is equally absurd.

Indeed, from what we know of man's nature, and of the adaptation of the moral government of his Creator to it, we can clearly perceive *how* he may be reclaimed, even from the lowest depths of guilt.

He is (to repeat what has so often been said) the creature of circumstance. He is made what he is entirely by the train of events which has befallen him. The powers with which he is endowed have been called into action by surrounding objects, and the nature of that action has been determined by that of the objects which have induced it. Had the situation of any human being varied in the least, there must have been a proportionable difference in his character.

This is so true, that any being who had entirely in his own hands the direction of the events of the world, and who possessed a perfect knowledge of the nature of man, might make his character whatever he pleased. There is no affection, however fixed, which he might not change—no habit, however inveterate, which he might not eradicate. And this he might effect, as we have already shown, without putting the least restraint upon the will, or making the slightest infringement on the liberty of the moral agent; for, by changing circustances, he might alter his volition, and thus excite in him the desire to do or to be whatever he might wish him to accomplish or to become.

Now this direction of events, and this knowledge of character, the Deity is always supposed to possess, in a supreme and perfect degree. There is nothing which he does not know—nothing which he cannot accomplish. Suppose, then, it is his will to reclaim a person who has lost all taste for goodness, and contracted the most inveterate habits of vice. The reformation of such a being is a thing in itself possible. As, then, the Deity knows every thing, he must perceive what circumstances will be adequate to produce the requisite change; and, as he can do every thing, it must be in his power to cause this train of events to happen. Here, then, is a power abundantly adequate to accomplish whatever may be necessary.

That this formation of the character of man, by the circumtances in which he is placed, is perpetually going on, under the divine direction, in the present state, is acknowledged on all hands, and constitutes what is termed the moral government of God. Now the defect of every scheme but that which it is the object of this reasoning to establish, is, that it makes the operation of this moral government to cease with the present state. But, if the wicked are to exist hereafter, it is certain that they must be placed in some circumstances; these circumstances must have some effect upon their minds, and the nature of that effect, whether it be such as to confirm them in their vicious course, or to reclaim them from it, must entirely depend upon the constitution of these circumstances. It is a Being of perfect wisdom upon whom that constitution depends. Can we then doubt that it will be such as to secure reformation, and not confirmation in vice?

Let the mind, then, seriously consider what the human nature is—that it is capable of pure,

refined, and exalted happiness, in an illimitable degree—that it is made for the enjoyment of this felicity—that its benevolent Author exercises over it a continual government, which tends to remove, and which, if its operation continue, must ultimately remove all that is opposed to it—and determine which scheme is most probable; that which teaches that the great majority of mankind shall never taste of happiness, but suffer the most intolerable and unremitted anguish during an endless being, or that which affirms that, after having endured this misery for unknown ages, they shall be for ever blotted out of existence, or that which maintains, that all which their Maker designed concerning them shall come to pass—that the very sin and suffering which afflict them shall be the means of working out their final purity and happiness, and that they shall accomplish this in so excellent and perfect a manner, as triumphantly to prove, that, notwithstanding all our present difficulties about the existence of natural and moral evil, THE BENEVOLENT PARENT OF MANKIND HAS ACCOMPLISHED THE BEST END BY THE WISEST MEANS. If the latter opinion be indeed favoured by these two great principles, the perfections of God and the nature of man, its truth must be considered as established.

If, then, we could go no farther, the arguments which have been adduced to support the doctrine of the ultimate restoration of all mankind to purity and happiness appear sufficient to produce a rational and solid conviction of its truth. They prove, certainly, that it rests upon much firmer ground than either of the doctrines which oppose it; and when, in connexion with this, *the doctrine itself* is considered, every reflective mind must surely incline to prefer it. If, then, we could not produce another argument in support of it, and if, on examining the scriptures, it be found that they do not contradict it, (supposing they do not expressly favour, if they do not directly confute it,) it must be admitted as true, because in that case there will be much to favour, and nothing to oppose it. But, in point of fact, reason furnishes us with still more conclusive arguments, and the scriptural evidence in support of it is decisive.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE ARGUMENT IN FAVOUR OF THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, FROM THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF PUNISHMENT.

ONE of the chief objections to the doctrine which it is the object of the preceding reasoning to establish, is, that although the Deity is in the highest degree wise and good, yet that he is, at the same time, an irreconcilable enemy to sin—that he will visit it with the punishment it deserves, and that, while we are sure that that punishment must be great, we have no means of ascertaining its exact extent.

If the doctrine of Universal Restoration denied this, that circumstance would be fatal to it, whatever might be urged in its favour; but God's abhorrence of sin, and his determination to punish it, not only do not militate against this doctrine, but afford the most powerful arguments in support of it.

In order to be satisfied of this, it is necessary only to establish clear and precise conceptions concerning the nature of divine punishment. What is the meaning of this term? It has been lately defined thus: *Punishment is the conduct of God with respect to the wicked, in the capacity of a Judge.*

The defect of this account is that it is a definition which requires a definition; for, when, in an inquiry concerning the nature of divine punishment, it is said that it is the conduct of God with respect to the wicked, in the capacity of a Judge, we must inevitably put the ulterior question, what is the nature of that conduct? whence another definition must be given, which perhaps may require a third.

Let the following definition be substituted for the former: *Punishment is the infliction of pain, in consequence of the neglect or violation of duty.* When we say a person is punished, we mean that he suffers some pain or privation, in consequence of his having omitted what he ought to have done, or of his having done what he ought to have avoided.

Is there any distinction between punishment and revenge? They are universally believed to be totally different in their nature. What, then, is the exact difference between them? It is of the utmost importance to ascertain this, because revenge is the only thing with which punishment can be confounded.

It has been said that punishment is the infliction of pain, in consequence of the neglect or violation of duty. Let us then say, that *Revenge is the infliction of pain, in consequence of the commission of injury.* The neglect of duty seems to give rise to punishment—the commission of injury to revenge. But, since the commission of injury must necessarily be resolved, either into a neglect or violation of duty, it follows, that these two definitions are exactly the same. Either, therefore, the definition of punishment must be defective, or that of revenge must be false; for, if these two things really differ from each other, it is impossible that the same definition can apply to both.

We purposely made these definitions defective, in order that the difference between punishment and revenge might be more clearly seen, and that the appearance of taking for granted the point in dispute might be avoided.

It is necessary to add to the former definition of punishment, the words, 'with a view to correct the evil,' and to that of revenge, the words, 'with a view to gratify a malignant passion.' These definitions will then stand thus:—

Punishment is the infliction of pain, in consequence of the neglect or violation of duty, WITH A VIEW TO CORRECT THE EVIL.

Revenge is the infliction of pain, in consequence of the commission of injury, WITH A VIEW TO GRATIFY A MALIGNANT PASSION.

That the pain which punishment occasions must be inflicted with a view to correct the evil produced by the neglect or violation of duty, will appear perfectly obvious, by attending to the exact meaning of the language we are in the habit of employing on this subject. What do we mean when we say that we neglect or violate our duty? We mean, that we neglect or destroy our own happiness, or that of others. When we neglect or destroy our own happiness, or that of others we produce a certain degree of misery. This is wrong; since it is contrary to the design for which we exist, which is to communicate and to enjoy happiness. On account of the commission of this wrong, punishment is inflicted; that is, another portion of misery is produced. Who causes this second portion of misery? The punisher. Thus far, then, the punisher and the punished are on the same footing; they have both done exactly the same thing; they have both produced misery. What, then, constitutes the difference between them? The violator of his duty deserves punishment, because he has done that which either has produced, or which tends to produce misery; but the punisher himself has done exactly the same thing; that is, he has occasioned pain. Why, then, is he *not* worthy of punishment, for the very act of punishing?

The reason is to be found in the *design* with which the punisher inflicts the pain of which he is the occasion. He has in view the restoration of the offender to a state of feeling and action indispensable to the happiness of others, and to his own. He produces misery, but it is the instrument he employs to destroy it. If he have not this in view, he is even more criminal than the person he punishes, since the infliction of pain is the only thing he designs. He rests in it as his end; it is his ultimate object. But the vicious in general produce misery only incidentally, through a mistaken and perverted pursuit of happiness, and it is more malignant to aim *solely* at the infliction of pain, to rest in it as an object and end, than to occasion it by a miscalculation of the means of enjoyment. It is this very circumstance, that it rests in misery as its ultimate object, which constitutes the extreme malignity of revenge; and it does not seem possible to show how he who inflicts pain on an offender, from any other motive but that of correcting the evil of which he has been the occasion, acts upon a different principle.

When it is said that punishment must have respect to the correction of the evil produced by the violation or neglect of duty, it should be observed, that this is meant to include both the evil disposition of the criminal, and the evil consequences which his crimes occasion. That correction is evidently imperfect, which has respect to the one, but not to the other —which aims to remove the injury done to society, but not the evil principle which is its source—or, on the contrary, the evil principle, but not its injurious consequences.

Though the misconception which prevails on this subject has originated chiefly from denying the corrective nature of punishment, yet, in point of fact, no one disbelieves that it is corrective. Many persons, indeed, deny it in express terms, and much of their reasoning seems to depend upon their disbelief that it has any tendency of this kind; but sometimes they strenuously contend for the very point which at others they labour to disprove. Though they affirm that punishment is not corrective, what they mean is, that it does not amend the evil disposition of the criminal. They acknowledge that it corrects, or is designed to correct, the evil consequences of his offences. But if it be the design of punishment to repair or to counteract the evil effects of a crime to society, it is in its nature corrective. If the reformation of the criminal form no part of the design, it is not so corrective as it would be, were that the case. But it is certainly corrective, and the error lies in supposing that punishment is intended to correct only a part of the evil, the bad consequences of a criminal disposition, but not the criminal disposition itself.

In punishments inflicted by human beings upon one another, it is often difficult to effect both, as indeed it is to accomplish either; but it is universally acknowledged, that that punishment is not benevolent, which does not aim at, nor that effectual which does not secure, both.

And surely it is possible to render every penal infliction thus complete. If pain or privation can counteract the evil consequences of the conduct of an offender, it may be so applied as to eradicate his evil disposition. He who is perfectly acquainted with the criminal temper understands exactly the circumstances which would change it, and has a sovereign control over events—has the power to correct it; and, if he punish with any design, it is inconceivable that this, which is not only the most benevolent, but the most necessary, will form no part of it.

But it is urged, that there is an intrinsic demerit in sin—something in its nature which requires that it should be visited with punishment—that it is possible, therefore, to punish an offender without a view to correct the evil, and without revenge, namely, to satisfy the claims of immutable and eternal justice.

Before replying directly to this objection, it may be observed, that the term justice is often used as though it expressed an attribute which is contrary to goodness. But, in reality, justice is only a particular modification of goodness—goodness modified by wisdom, according to the moral condition of the being with respect to whom it is exercised. A person who forgives an offence upon repentance and reformation is good. This is one modification of goodness, which is designated by the term mercy. The person who visits an offence which is neither repented of nor amended, with a proper degree of pain, is also good. This is another modification of goodness, to which the term justice is applied. Mercy and justice, therefore, do not differ from each other in their nature, since they equally arise from

benevolence, and they differ in aspect only, according to the moral condition of the being with regard to whom they are exemplified; so that justice cannot require the infliction of misery for its own sake. Nothing but malignity can either desire or approve of such unavailing suffering.

Since justice and mercy equally arise from benevolence, there is as much reason to suppose that mercy requires the infliction of misery for its own sake, as that justice does. The object of justice is not to feast itself with suffering, but to produce happiness by the infliction of pain, where wisdom teaches it is necessary. The object of mercy is exactly the same, only it pursues its purposes by omitting the infliction of pain, where wisdom shows that it is *not* necessary.

There is, it is affirmed, an intrinsic demerit in sin—something in its nature which requires that it should be visited with punishment. What is that something? I think we may venture to affirm, that no one can imagine it to be any thing but the tendency of sin to produce misery. But the infliction of pain, upon that which has a tendency to occasion pain, is the application of an effectual remedy to a destructive disease—not the visitation of suffering upon something which is inexplicable, with a design which is equally incomprehensible.

If what is here termed demerit, and which is supposed to be something intrinsic in sin, require, as an equitable satisfaction, the infliction of a certain degree of pain, without aiming at the reformation of the offender, or the prevention of sin in future, its infliction with this view alone is the infliction of nothing else but misery, the production of which is all that is done or designed—a remedy which, as has just been observed, is more malignant than the disease itself. It is vain to repeat, that the object in view is the satisfaction of justice, not the infliction of pain, for this is to reason in a circle; it is to say, that justice requires that sin should be visited with pain, on account of its intrinsic demerit, and then to argue, that there is an intrinsic demerit in sin, because justice requires that it should be visited with pain.

It seems possible, however, to go much farther in reply to this objection, and to show that the term demerit is without meaning, upon the hypothesis which is here assumed. Let us attend to the manner in which we come at the idea which the word expresses.

There is such a thing as virtue, and there is such a thing, of an opposite nature, as vice. Such is the constitution of man, that virtue must eventually promote his happiness, and vice his misery. In proportion as an action partakes of the nature of virtue, it is said to coincide with the object of this constitution, and to merit happiness. In proportion as it partakes of the nature of vice, it is said to be opposed to the object of this constitution, and deserve misery. The very origin of this word, then, leads us to a moral constitution, which can have no object but the production of happiness and the prevention of misery; and accordingly we find that the degree of demerit in an action—that is, the degree of suffering it deserves, is always in proportion to the extent of the misery it tends to produce.

That all the divine punishments are corrective, is evident likewise from every thing which we see or know of these inflictions. All experience is in favour of the doctrine of corrective punishment, and against that which denies it. To what example can we point, where misery is connected with sin, in which the pain has not a tendency to correct the evil? Every passion of our nature carried to excess is criminal; every passion carried to excess is painful. This pain is said to be the punishment of the passion, now, from its having passed the bounds of moderation and justice, become criminal. The same is true of every evil propensity and habit whatever. All are attended with pain or inconvenience, which increases in proportion to the enormity of the evil. What is the design of this constitution? It is not possible to mistake it. It is not in our power to assign to it any other object than the correction of the excess, the eradication of the evil propensity, the change of the evil habit.

If, then, in the very constitution of our nature, we recognize this benevolent design—if our own hearts punish us for all our deviations from the path of rectitude, and will not permit us to be at peace in sin, in order that we may continually follow after virtue—can we suppose that the punishment which the Deity will hereafter inflict upon his erring creatures will have no such tendency—that the pain which he makes the natural consequence of transgression is purely and highly corrective, but that that which he himself will bring upon the transgressor, that which by his own direct act he will superadd, will not be so—and that, instead of perfecting, by his immediate and decisive interposals, the primary object of the constitution of his creatures, he will totally abandon it, and pursue one of which he has given no indication in their nature, and to which nothing in their nature tends?

That all the punishment inflicted upon offenders in the present state is corrective, is universally acknowledged. Those, therefore, who suppose that this will not be the case in a future world, must believe that the Deity will hereafter punish with a different design from that which he pursues at present—that he will change the object and end of his inflictions. But why will he do so? What reason can there be to believe that the purpose of him who changeth not is thus mutable? The mode and the measure of punishment he may vary; circumstances may require it of his wisdom, but his great and ultimate object, like his own most perfect nature, must be eternally the same.

But to arguments of this kind, other arguments, tending to establish an opposite conclusion, have been urged, which as this is a point

of capital importance, it may be proper to notice.*

Objection 1. It is admitted, by the advocates of the corrective nature of punishment, that the punishment which will be actually inflicted on the impenitent, whatever be its amount and duration, is the curse of the divine law; but the punishment which leads to repentance is upon the whole no evil, and therefore no curse, because by the supposition it is necessary to repentance, and to prepare for the everlasting joys of heaven. Instead, therefore, of being a curse, it is the greatest blessing which Omnipotence itself can bestow.

Answer. If by the curse of the divine law he meant positive and absolute evil, it is true that there is no curse annexed to the divine law; for it has been already shown, that there is no absolute evil in the universe; and Mr. Edwards himself, as ardent an advocate for endless misery as his son, quotes with approbation a passage in which the opinion, that under the divine administration there is no real and ultimate evil, is asserted in express terms. In a most important sense it is true, that the punishment which leads to repentance is upon the whole no real evil, and that future punishment, as it is necessary to produce, and effectual in producing, repentance, and in preparing the sinner for ultimate happiness, is the greatest blessing which Omnipotence itself can bestow; nevertheless, it may still be called a curse, because, in the language of scripture, severe and protracted suffering is often so denominated.

Objection 2. On the hypothesis, that future punishment will be corrective, it follows that all men will not be saved, because deliverance from the curse of the law is essential to salvation; but if the curse of the law be that punishment which is necessary to lead to repentance, and if a great part of mankind will suffer this punishment, it follows that a great part of mankind will not be saved; for to be saved, and yet to suffer the curse of the law, is a contradiction. Moreover, a deliverance from the curse of the law would be a deprivation of the greatest good which God, in their present temper, can possibly bestow upon the wicked.

Answer. This objection is entirely verbal. The advocates for the corrective nature of punishment do not believe that all men will be saved, but that, sinners having been reclaimed by the discipline through which they will be made to pass, all men will ultimately be rendered pure and happy. Accordingly, they maintain that the impenitent must be subjected to future punishment, for the very reason assigned in the objection, that, were it otherwise, it would argue a defect of wisdom and goodness in their moral Governor, since it would be to withhold from them the greatest good which, in their present temper, he can bestow upon them.

Objection 3. If the penalty of the law consist in that punishment which is necessary to lead to repentance, then all upon whom it is inflicted, when brought to repentance, are delivered from farther suffering—not on the ground of mercy and goodness, but of justice. They have satisfied the divine law. If, therefore, they are not immediately released from farther punishment, they are injured and oppressed. Accordingly, all forgiveness of the impenitent is impossible, since forgiveness implies that the sinner forgiven is not punished according to law and justice; but, on the hypothesis under consideration, all who suffer future punishment are punished according to law and justice, in as much as they endure that punishment which is necessary to repentance.

Answer. It is true, that all who suffer future punishment endure the penalty of the law, and therefore, in a popular sense, cannot be said to be forgiven. It is true, also, that, after they have suffered all the punishment annexed to the law, any farther punishment of them would be unjust. Their exemption from farther punishment is therefore, without doubt, required by strict justice; and yet, under the divine administration, it is highly improper to speak even of that very exemption as a matter of right; for such is the nature of punishment under the government of God, that it is as benevolent a provision as the direct and immediate bestowment of happiness. It is not only the actual communication of good, but the communication of good in the form best calculated to secure happiness. The sinner is therefore as much indebted to the Creator for it, as he is for the gift of life itself, and for that constitution of his nature which renders life a blessing. When, therefore, that happy period shall have arrived, when punishment shall be no longer necessary—when it shall have accomplished its work—when it shall have eradicated the disposition to evil, and have produced a fitness for happiness, instead of proudly claiming exemption from it, the sinner, with unbounded gratitude, will adore and bless his benignant Creator for having inflicted it. He will perceive that it was the wisest and kindest provision which his heavenly Father could possibly have made for his happiness, and, with the profoundest emotions of dutiful obedience and filial love, he will thank him for it.

The punishment inflicted upon the sinner being, then, in truth, the communication of good to him, in the manner that is best adapted to his moral state, it is evidently absurd to speak of his claiming exemption from it as a matter of right. It is the necessary, though painful means to a wise and benevolent end, and it will cease, of course, as soon as it has accomplished its end.

* The following objections and reasonings are taken from the celebrated work of Dr. Jonathan Edwards; entitled, 'The Salvation of all Men strictly examined,' in reply to Dr. Chauncey. They comprehend all which any one can conceive to be important in his second and third chapters, in which various considerations, tending to prove that the future punishment of the wicked will not be conducive to their personal good, are urged with much acuteness.

This view of punishment is truly honourable to the Deity—truly calculated to win the most obdurate to the love and adoration of him; while that view of punishment which is implied in the objection is essentially unjust, because it is the infliction of mere pain—pain that answers and that is intended to answer, no beneficial purpose, which—as it is perfectly inconsistent with goodness, so it must be totally irreconcilable to justice.

Objection 4. If the only just end of punishment be repentance, and there be any curse of the law at all, it must be repentance itself.

Answer. The curse of the law is not repentance, but the suffering necessary to produce repentance.

Objection 5. If the only just end of punishment be to lead the sinner to repentance, and to promote his individual good, and if all just punishment be a mere discipline, necessary and wholesome to the recipient, then punishment inflicted for any other end is unjust. It is therefore unjust to punish a sinner on account of any contempt of the Deity, any opposition to his design and to his cause, or on account of any injury which he may do to his fellow-beings, excepting so far as he injures himself at the same time.

Answer. Those who maintain that punishment inflicted by an infinitely wise, powerful, and good Being, must be corrective, do not mean that it must correct the evil disposition of the sinner alone, without any reference to the injury done to the system. They contend that perfect goodness must aim at both—that infinite wisdom must perceive the means by which both may be accomplished, and that almighty power must be able to render those means effectual. To effect one end alone, while both are equally possible and equally necessary, they believe to argue an imperfection which cannot exist under the divine administration. It is just to punish the sinner on account of contempt of the Deity and opposition to his will, both because that contempt and opposition are injurious to the sinner himself and to the system, and it is the proper object of punishment, to repair the injury done to both.

Objection 6. On the hypothesis, that all punishment is corrective, it must be maintained, that vindictive punishment is unjust; yet at the same time it is admitted, that the punishment actually inflicted is in the highest degree vindictive. For a vindictive punishment is that which is inflicted with a design to support the authority of a broken law; but if the punishment which is necessary to lead the sinner to repentance be sufficient to support the authority of the divine law, and be inflicted for this end, as is admitted, it is to the highest degree vindictive, and designedly vindictive. Those, therefore, who allow, that as much punishment will be inflicted on the sinner as satisfies the demands of law, while they mean to oppose vindictive punishment, hold it in the fullest sense.

Answer. A law is a rule designed to regulate the conduct of an intelligent being. It is implied in its very notion, that it is imposed for the good of that being; it exists only for the sake of that good; it cannot, therefore, have any interest or demand separate from or opposed to that good. Any punishment annexed to the violation of it is imposed not for the sake of the law, but for the sake of the being for whose welfare the law is instituted. Separate from that being, the law is nothing; separate from his welfare, it is useless. When, therefore, its right, and claim, and demand are spoken of, all that can be meant is, that its sanction ought to be such, and so certainly imposed, as to secure obedience; that is, to secure the welfare of this being. To maintain the rights of the law, then, to vindicate its claims, to satisfy its demands, and to promote the good of the being for whose welfare it was instituted, must be identical. If, therefore, by vindictive punishment be meant that which is inflicted with a design to support the authority of the divine law, vindictive punishment and corrective punishment are precisely the same.

Objection 7. If sin deserve no other punishment than that which is subservient to the good of the sinner, it will follow that sin is no moral evil; for that which is subservient to a person's good is no real evil; but moral evil is in its own nature odious; hence it is not injurious to the perpetrator of moral evil, to manifest disapprobation of his conduct, whether such manifestation be subservient to his good or not.

Answer. Moral evil is in its own nature odious only in so far as it tends to produce misery. Punishment itself is the infliction of misery. To punish the perpetrator of moral evil, without aiming to correct his evil disposition, is to produce a certain sum of misery because a certain sum of misery has already been produced, and to do no more; but the production of this second portion of misery, with this design, is no less evil than the production of the first. Whereas, if punishment be inflicted on the perpetrator of moral evil, with a view to correct his evil disposition, natural evil is made the instrument of correcting moral evil. On this supposition, the actual and ultimate sum of happiness may be increased by this partial and temporary prevalence of both, and therefore the permission of both may be consistent with perfect goodness.

Objection 8. If the only just end of punishment be to produce repentance, sin immediately followed by repentance deserves no punishment, because the end of punishment is already obtained; but repentance, though it is a renunciation of sin in future, makes no alteration in the nature of the sin which is past, nor is it any satisfaction for that sin. Neither, if the correction of sin be the only proper end of punishment, is it just to inflict punishment on sin as sin. Whether it be followed by punishment or not, must depend, not on its own proper nature, but on some accidental circumstance, as whether it be followed by impenitence, or whether it be persisted in; and, if it do not deserve punishment unless it be persisted in, then the first act of sin is no

moral evil; but, if the first act be not a moral evil, why is the second, the third, or any subsequent act?

Answer. Sin, immediately followed by sincere repentance, does indeed deserve no other punishment than that which, by the constitution of the human mind, is inseparably connected with conscious guilt, because the end of punishment is already obtained. It has been shown above, that punishment, under the divine administration, is not retrospective, but prospective—has no respect to the past, excepting in so far as the past influences the future. Repentance, it is true, makes no alteration in the nature of the sin which is past, neither does any punishment which can be inflicted; nor is there any just or intelligible sense in which satisfaction can be made for sin, which does not include a reformation of the sinner. Sin is no otherwise sinful, no otherwise a moral evil, than as it produces pain; and the only proper object of punishment is to counteract that tendency: but that counteraction is as complete as is possible, as soon as repentance is induced. The whole evil of sin consists in its tendency to produce pain. An action, therefore, is sinful in proportion as it has that tendency: whence the demerit of sin does not depend, as the objection states, on some accidental circumstance, as whether it be persisted in, or whether it be the first act, and so on, but on its tendency to produce pain.

Objection 9. If future punishment be merely disciplinary, the discipline will produce its effect on some sooner than on others. The discipline of the present state is oftentimes successful, even within so short a period as three-score years and ten; we may therefore reasonably conclude, that within the like term far greater numbers will be brought to repentance by the more powerful means which will be used in the future state. With what truth, then, can the wicked be threatened with everlasting punishment, and why is there no intimation given, that there will be a difference in that duration?

Answer. The words employed in the sacred scriptures, to denote the duration of the punishment of the wicked, naturally lead to the conclusion, that it will be protracted; but, with regard to the actual duration of it to any individual, or to any number of individuals, it determines nothing. The scriptures have drawn a veil over this, as over every thing that relates to the future world, which is well calculated to impress the mind with awe; but no objection can be fairly urged against the corrective nature of future punishment, because the scriptures enter into no detail respecting its duration.

Objection 10. If future punishment be merely disciplinary, it is inflicted without any necessity, and therefore must be a wanton exercise of cruelty; for the repentance of sinners might be easily obtained without the imposition of dreadful torments for ages of ages. That same wisdom and power, which lead many to repentance in this life, might, by similar or by superior means, produce the like effect on all. Or, if a more painful discipline be necessary, a more painful discipline might be imposed, or God might exhibit the truth with such clear and overwhelming evidence, as inevitably to produce conviction.

Answer. Such a discipline, in the present state, as should certainly and uniformly secure reformation, or such an exhibition of the truth as should produce a universal and influential conviction of it, is possible; but, were it adopted, the whole system of things must be changed. Such a discipline, such an exhibition of the truth, are obviously incompatible with the present constitution of man, and with his actual relations. But it has already been shown, that the present system is adopted because it is upon the whole the wisest and best. Future punishment is a necessary part of that system. What the actual amount and duration of it will be, we do not know. With undoubting confidence, we may leave it to the determination of that wisdom which is absolute, and of that goodness which is perfect. Absolute wisdom—perfect goodness, we may be assured, will inflict no more than is indispensably necessary. The infliction of so much misery for so much misery, which is all that punishment can be, if it be not corrective, is indeed wanton cruelty, and is therefore inconsistent with the attributes of the moral Governor of the world; but the infliction of a certain degree of misery, in order to produce an immeasurable degree of happiness, is compatible with the highest wisdom and the most perfect goodness.

Objection 11. It is implied, in the very idea of a disciplinary punishment, that it is consistent with the divine perfections, to subject a sinner to misery for his own good. Why, then, is it not equally consistent with those perfections, to subject him to misery for the sake of promoting the good of the system, provided that misery do not exceed the demerit of the subject? If the punishment of the sinner may lead him to repentance, so it may lead other sinners to repentance, or it may restrain them from sin, and in a variety of ways may as much subserve the good of those who are not the subjects of punishment, as of him who is. And that the good of other persons may be of equal, nay, of far greater importance to the system, than the good of the transgressor himself, cannot be denied.

Answer. This argument assumes, that the infliction of endless misery for the crimes of a few years is consistent with justice; but that this assumption is false, will be shown in the chapter on the justice of God; and, if false, the argument on which it is founded is of course fallacious. Moreover, it is not just to argue, that, because it is consistent with the divine perfections, to subject a sinner to misery for his own good, it is equally so to subject him to misery for the sake of promoting the good of the system, because this implies that the good of the individual and of the system is incompatible, whereas it is identical. In the fair and glorious system of creation, designed by infinite goodness, arranged by unerring wisdom, and effected by almighty power, the

exquisite and endless misery of the majority is not made necessary to the happiness of the minority, but the happiness of the whole is secured by the ultimate happiness of every individual. That the happiness of the whole is as possible as the happiness of a few, and that a system in which the ultimate happiness of the whole is secured is more excellent and perfect than that in which the majority are rendered endlessly miserable, cannot be denied; we ought therefore to suppose that the former is the system which the Deity has adopted, because it is the most worthy of his attributes. The latter is not worthy of those attributes; it is not compatible with them. It is inconsistent with goodness, to give existence to any creature, without making that existence, upon the whole, a good to him; consequently, though it be just to subject the sinner to misery for his own good, yet it is alike irreconcilable to justice and to goodness, to subject him to misery for the sake of promoting the good of the system, unless the balance of happiness, upon the whole, the whole of his existence considered, be in his favour. It is perfectly consistent with justice and benevolence, to promote the good of the system, by any disposition whatever, of any number of creatures, provided they enjoy, upon the whole, more than they suffer; but any disposition of them, for any purpose, which renders it necessary that they should suffer more than they enjoy, is a plain violation of rectitude; because nonexistence is no evil, but existence with a preponderance of misery is; and an intelligent being, who acts voluntarily, and who gives existence to any creature, knowing that it will be, upon the whole, an evil to him, performs as malignant an act as can be conceived. And, if this be true, though but one creature suffer, upon the whole, a preponderance of misery, what language can express, what imagination can conceive, the imperfection in which all the attributes of the Creator are involved, upon the scheme, that he brought into existence the great majority of mankind, with the design of afflicting them with unutterable torments through endless ages, in order to promote the happiness of comparatively a few! It is a scheme as unworthy of the wisdom, as it is incompatible with the goodness, of the great Parent of mankind.

Thus, the more this subject is investigated, the more clear and overwhelming the evidence becomes, that punishment, under the divine administration, is corrective; and, if this position be established, the whole controversy is decided.

The inferences deducible from the preceding observations throw upon this subject a light and glory which render it an object of gratifying as well as of impressive contemplation.

If the punishment which the Deity inflicts be corrective, it follows that no punishment can be without end; for a punishment which is both corrective and endless is a contradiction in terms.

If all punishment be corrective, it follows that no more punishment than is absolutely necessary to produce reformation will be imposed; for he who endeavours to correct an evil will accomplish his object as speedily, and with as little loss of happiness, as possible.

If any punishment be corrective, it follows that as much as is necessary to eradicate sin will be inflicted. This to the sinner is a most alarming consideration. God cannot inflict infinite misery upon a finite being; but we know not to how great an extent, within the limit of finiteness, it may be just, and right, and necessary, to impose it. Of all the truths which can occupy the attention of human beings, this certainly is the most momentous. If there be certainty in religion, or truth in God, he who in the present state neglects the improvement of his privileges, indulges evil habits, lives in sin, and dies in impenitence, must in a future world endure an anguish of which at present he can form no adequate conception. It is reasonable to believe that *this must* be the case, for the bitter consciousness of self-degradation, and the horror of deep remorse, must be felt, and we require to know no more, to be assured that the sensation must be intolerable. Such is the dictate of reason; the declarations of scripture confirm it. They describe the punishment of obstinate and unrepentant guilt as a fearful looking for of wrath, treasured up against the day of wrath. It is a worm that dieth not; it is a fire that is not quenched. It is the worm of remorse, preying with incessant avidity upon an awakened conscience; it is the fire of tumultuous passions, which cannot be quenched till it has consumed the evil of the heart which has indulged them. Though justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne, thou art terrible, O Lord, in thy chastisements; for terrible is the evil with which thou art at war, and which it is the design of thy benevolent chastisements to eradicate. 'Let, then, the wicked man forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, who will abundantly pardon him.'

PART THIRD.

OF THE OBJECTIONS WHICH ARE URGED AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL RESTORATION, WHETHER DERIVED FROM THOSE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE, OR FROM THOSE REASONINGS WHICH ARE SUPPOSED TO PROVE THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS MISERY, OR FROM THOSE WHICH ARE CONCEIVED TO FAVOUR THE DOCTRINE OF LIMITED PUNISHMENT, TERMINATED BY DESTRUCTION.

Having considered those arguments in favour of the opinion, that purity and happiness will ultimately and universally prevail, which appear to be in a great measure independent of the testimony of revelation, it would now be proper to examine the evidence which the scriptures afford in support of it. But, as many objections to this doctrine, commonly deemed insuperable, are derived from the language of scripture, it is necessary to consider, in the first place, the validity of the testimony which it thus seems to bear against it; otherwise, the evidence which it really affords in its favour will not have its just weight upon the mind.

The chief objections to the doctrine of Universal Restoration are derived from two sources; from certain passages of scripture, and from certain reasonings which are supposed to prove the doctrine of Endless Misery, and from certain expressions which are conceived to favour the doctrine of Limited Punishment, terminated by destruction. It will be proper to consider each separately.

CHAPTER I.

OF ENDLESS MISERY.

The doctrine of Endless Misery teaches, that, with the exception of the first man, God brings the whole human race into existence with an innate propensity to evil*—that, to counteract this fatal tendency, in favour of a few individuals, termed the elect, he especially interposes,† irresistibly influencing them to avoid whatever might endanger their salvation, and to do what is necessary to secure it* —that the great majority of his creatures, termed the non-elect, he leaves to the operation of a nature which must inevitably ensure their ruin†—that for these unhappy beings he does not interpose‡—that he abandons them to endless and inconceivable misery,‖ and that from all eternity he appointed them to this dreadful destiny, by an irreversible decree, determining them to condemnation.§

The most execrable tyrant that ever desolated the world is benevolence itself, compared with the character which this tremendous doctrine gives to the benevolent Parent of the human race. If it be true, God is not good; for it has already been proved, that, in giving existence to sensitive creatures, a benevolent being must make it upon the whole a blessing. No creature, it is admitted, has a right to existence; it is a boon to which it is impossible that there could have been a previous claim;

* 'The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin—the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually.'—*Assembly's Larger Catechism*, quest. xxv.

† 'By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace.'—*Confession of Faith*, chap. iii.—'All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, AND THOSE ONLY, he is pleased, in his accepted time, effectually to call.'—*Ibid.*, chap. x.

* 'They whom God hath effectually called can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election.'—*Ibid.*, chap. xvii.

† 'Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and to the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious, and to be detested.'—*Ibid.*, chap. x.

‡ 'These men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and the number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.'—*Confession of Faith*, chap. iii.

‖ 'The punishment of sin in the world to come are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, *and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire, for ever.*'—*Assembly's Catechism*. quest. xxix.

§ 'By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men are foreordained to everlasting death.'—*Confession of Faith*, chap. iii.

but, being bestowed, justice as well as benevolence requires that it should be rendered, upon the whole, a good. However low an individual may be placed in the scale of being, or whatever pain may be mingled in his lot, if the balance of happiness be in his favour, he can ask no more; his great inalienable right is respected; it is his duty to submit to the evil with resignation, and to accept the good with gratitude; but if the balance of pleasure be against him, he has cause to murmur, and the Being who gave him life upon such terms is not good, nor can any sophistry prove him to be so.

Were it *possible* for benevolence to reside in the bosom of a being who could decree the intolerable and unending anguish of millions, and millions, and millions, of his creatures, it might indeed be inferred, that the God of election is good to the elect; but to the non-elect he is not good; he never was, and he never intended to be. He gave them existence with a determination to make it an everlasting curse;* he brought them into being not to enjoy, for against that he passed a decree which no power in earth or heaven can resist, but to suffer, through the ages of eternity, unremitted and intolerable anguish.

Were there in the nature of the Deity not the least portion of benevolence—instead of being, as it is, pure benignity, were it unmixed evil, it could not be worse for the great majority of his creatures, than, according to this terrible doctrine, it actually is. At present, indeed, they enjoy some degree of pleasure, but it is only sufficient, in the awful period of futurity, to carry their misery to the highest pitch, by enabling them to comprehend their eternal loss; and accordingly, the bitterest anguish of the damned is usually represented as arising from recollections of the present state—recollections of happiness once participated with delight, but now departed forever.

Were, then, the Deity, instead of being pure benevolence, malignant as malignity itself, and had he engaged in the work of creation on purpose to gratify his malevolent propensities, he could not, as far as we can see, have contrived a plan better calculated to effect his purpose, than that which this doctrine teaches he actually has adopted, with regard to the great majority of his creatures.

Can any person look into his own heart, and read the proofs which are registered there, of his most excellent and lovely character, without feeling disgust and horror at a doctrine which thus enshrouds him in the deep and awful gloom of cruelty and malevolence?

It is affirmed that there are passages of scripture which, in the most express and positive manner, assert the truth of this opinion, and others which imply it; this is not true. But there are, it must be admitted, passages which, to the English reader, may *seem* to favour it. These deserve serious and impartial examination. Let us bring to the investigation of them unprejudiced and candid minds, willing to ascertain the truth.

SECTION I.

Of the Term Everlasting.

In favour of the doctrine of Endless Misery, the following passages are quoted, and are generally deemed decisive:—Isaiah, xxxiii. 14. 'The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?'—Daniel, vii. 2, 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.'—Matthew, xviii. 8, 'Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot cause thee to offend, cut them off, and cast them from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.'—Matthew, xxv. 41, 'Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Ver. 46, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.'—Mark, iii. 29, 'But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.'—2 Thessalonians, i. 7–9, 'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.'—Revelation, xiv. 11, 'The smoke of their torments goeth up for ever and ever.' xix. 3, 'The smoke goeth up for ever and ever.' xx. 10, 'They (the beast and false prophet) shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.'—2 Peter, ii. 17—Jude, 13, 'To whom the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever.'—Jude, 6, 7, 'And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their

* To say that it is not God's decree, but man's own sin, which renders him miserable for ever, is trifling in the extreme; for, since God is his Creator, he must be the author of that nature which he brings with him into the world; so that, if it be utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, it is such only in consequence of his Creator having been pleased to make it so. The circumstances in which mankind are placed are likewise entirely God's appointment. He is, then, the Author of their nature, such as it is, when they commence the career of life, and of the circumstances which call their propensities into action. Both that nature and these circumstances are such, that the ultimate result could not possibly be otherwise than it is. 'God's decrees, are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, *unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.*'—*Assembly's Catechism*, quest. xii.—He wills the propensity; he wills the means; and he so adapts the means to the propensity, and the propensity to the means, as inevitably to secure the end; and to affirm, therefore, that he does will the *end*, is utterly absurd.

own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.'

These, I believe, are all the passages in the Bible, in which the terms everlasting and eternal are used in relation to future punishment; and it is obvious, that they are very few, compared with what is commonly supposed. From the frequency with which they are generally repeated, persons imagine that the Bible is full of expressions of this kind; yet they occur twice only in the Old Testament. In the gospel of Luke, they are not to be found, and they occur but once in that of Mark. St. John does not once employ them, either in his gospel or in his epistles, and they will be sought in vain in the account of the preaching of the apostles, in all their discourses which are upon record, from the beginning to the end of the Acts. Though the writings of the apostle Paul form so large a portion of the New Testament, yet he never uses any language of this kind, except in one single instance, and then his expression is, *everlasting destruction*. Such words are no where to be found in the epistle of James, and they are totally absent from the epistles of Peter.

The truth of the doctrine cannot, however, be supposed to depend upon the frequency with which it is repeated. One decisive proof is sufficient. The preceding facts are mentioned only to remove the common error, that the application of the terms everlasting and eternal to future punishment is of constant recurrence.

All the proof which the above passages can afford, in support of the endless duration of punishment, must depend upon the words *everlasting* and *eternal*, and pre-suppose that they denote duration without end; but, in order to show this, it is necessary to prove, both that this is their primitive meaning, and that they are invariably used in this sense in scripture. That they do not primarily denote endless duration, seems evident from the fact, that they have a plural number. Had the primitive meaning of the substantive *aion* been eternity, and of the adjective *aionios*, endless, they could scarcely have possessed a plural signification, since it would have involved the same absurdity as is manifest when, attaching to the term eternity the sense which it always bears in the English language, we speak of eternities.

That these words are not *invariably* used in the scriptures to signify duration without end, is indisputable; yet they require to have this sense constantly and without exception, if their application to the subject of punishment be *alone* sufficient to prove its absolute eternity; for, if they ever denote limited duration, they *may* do so in regard to future punishment.

In order to ascertain the exact meaning of these terms, and the length of duration they signify, it is necessary to consider how they are used respecting other subjects in the New Testament, and in the Greek translation of the Old.

The word *aion* is used in scripture in several different senses. Sometimes it signifies the term of human life, at other times the duration of the world, and at others an age or dispensation of providence. In its plural form it denotes the age of the world, or any measurement of time, especially if its termination be hidden; but its most common signification is that of age or dispensation. It has this sense in the following passages:—

Matthew, xiii. 22, 'He who received seed among thorns is he who heareth the word and the anxious care,' *tou aionos, toutou*, of this æon, age, or world, &c. Ver. 39, 'The harvest is the end,' *tou aionos*, of the æon or age. Ver. 40, 'So will it be in the end,' *tou aionos toutou*, of this æon or age. Ver. 49, 'So will it be in the end,' *tou aionos*, of the æon or age.—Matthew, xxviii. 20, 'Lo, I am with you always to the end,' *tou aionos*, of the æon or age.—Luke xvi. 8, 'For the sons,' *tou aionos tou tou*, of this æon or age are more prudent. —Romans, xii. 2, 'Be not conformed, according *to aioni touto*, to this æon or age.—Titus, ii. 12, 'Live soberly, righteously, and piously,' *en to nun aioni*, in this present æon or age, and also in the following passages: Matthew, xii. 32, Mark, iv. 19, Luke, xx. 34, 1 Corinthians, viii. 13—x. 11, Galatians, i. 4, 1 Timothy, vi. 17, 2 Timothy, vi. 10, Hebrews, ix. 26.

That the terms *aion* and *aionios* often signify *limited* duration, is evident from the following passages:—

Aion.

Exodus, xxi. 6, 'Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall bring him to the door or the door-post, and, his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him, *eis ton aiona, for ever*;' that is, to the end of his life.

Ecclesiastes, i. 4, 'One generation passeth away and another cometh; but the earth abideth *eis ton aiona for ever*,' not surely to eternity, but from generation to generation.

John, viii. 35, 'The slave abideth not in the house, *eis ton aiona, for ever*; the son abideth, *eis ton aiona for ever*.' In Exodus, xxi. 2, it is affirmed, that the slave was at liberty to leave his master's house at the expiration of the sixth year; in the text it is said, that he abideth not with his master for ever, because he serves him for so short a period; and his temporary residence in the house is contrasted with that of the son, who is said to abide in it for ever, not because his continuance there will never end, but because he enjoys a residence with his father for an indefinite and comparatively long period. This passage shows, in a most striking manner, both the limited signification of this term, and the necessity of considering the subject to which it

is applied, before we determine the length of duration it denotes.

John, xiv. 16, 'The Father will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you, *eis ton aiona, for ever;*' that is, as long as you live.

1 Corinthians, viii. 13, 'If food cause my brother to offend, I will not eat flesh, *eis ton aiona, for ever,*' during the whole course of my life.

To these the following pages may be added;—1 Samuel, iii. 13, Micah, iv. 7, Matthew, xxiv. 3, John, xiii. 8, Ephesians, ii. 7, Hebrews, vi. 5.

That this term must be understood in a limited sense, is likewise evident from the fact, that the writers of the New Testament continually speak of different æons, and represent one æon as succeeding another. This mode of expression occurs in several passages which have already been quoted, and it is used upwards of twenty times in the New Testament, in all which places the phrase, this æon, necessarily stands opposed to some other æon.

For example, Ephesians, i. 21, 'Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only,' *en aioni touto, in this æon or age, alla kai en to mellonti, but also in that which is to come.*—Matthew, xii. 32. 'And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him; *oute en touto to aioni, neither in this æon or age, oute en to mellonti, nor in that which is to come.* Surely this cannot mean neither in this eternity nor in the eternity to come.

We also read of the *end* of the æon. Matthew, xxviii. 20, 'Lo, I am with you always to the end,' *tou aionos, of the æon or age;* not surely to the end of eternity. We even read of the end of the æons, and a period of time is spoken of prior to their commencement. Thus this word admits of the existence of time previous to the commencement of the age which it describes, and of an end to the periods which it speaks of as yet to come.

But what is absolutely decisive of its limited signification, is the addition of *eti* and *epekeina* to it in the following places:—

Exodus, xv. 18, 'The Lord shall reign,' *ton aiona, kai ep' aiona, kai eti, from æon to æon,* AND FARTHER.

Daniel, xii. 3, 'And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars,' *eis tous aionas, kai eti, through the æons,* AND FARTHER.

Micah, iv. 5, 'And we walk in the name of Jehovah our God,' *eis ton aiona, kai epekeina, through the æon,* AND BEYOND IT.

A patient inquirer into the genuine meaning of the phraseology of scripture, and very accurate critic, the late Mr. Simpson, makes the following observation on this term:* '*Aion* occurs about a hundred times in the New Testament, in seventy of which, at least, it is clearly used for a limited duration. In the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, also, it is even *repeated*, and several times it is repeated *twice*, without meaning eternity, and in two instances signifies no longer a period than the life of one man only.'

Aionios.

Genesis, ix. 16, 'And I will look upon the bow that I may remember, *diatheken aionion, the everlasting covenant* between God and all flesh upon the earth;' yet the world itself will have an end, and therefore, though this bow is said to be the testimonial of an *everlasting* covenant, yet it can possess only a limited duration.

Genesis, xvii. 8, 13, 19, 'And I will give unto thee and unto thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, *eis kataschesin aionion, for an everlasting possession.* He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh, *eis diatheken aionion, for an everlasting covenant.*'

In this passage the land of Canaan is called an *everlasting* possession, and the covenant of circumcision an *everlasting* covenant; yet the land of Canaan will not exist through endless ages, and the covenant of circumcision is declared in the New Testament to be already annulled.

Numbers, xxv. 13, 'He shall have it and his seed after him, even an everlasting covenant of priesthood,' *diatheke aionia,* yet the genealogy of Phineas and Aaron cannot now be traced.

Philemon, 15, 'He therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him *aionion, for ever,*' that is, for his whole life only.

Exodus, xl. 15, 'And thou shalt anoint them as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priests' office; *for their anointing shall.* SURELY *be an* EVERLASTING PRIESTHOOD.' Compare this with Hebrews, vii. 12, 'FOR THE PRIESTHOOD BEING CHANGED, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.' Ver. 18, 'For there is verily A DISANNULLING of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness of it.'

In the first of these passages it is affirmed, that Aaron's sons shall be established in an everlasting priesthood, and that the covenant made with them shall be without end; in the second it is declared, that this everlasting priesthood is changed, and this everlasting ordinance is now no more. Here, then, we have the express authority of scripture, for saying that an everlasting priesthood has come to an end, and that an everlasting covenant is disannulled.

Had the words which are here applied to the duration of Aaron's priesthood been annexed to that of future punishment, how impossible would it have been deemed, by many persons, to answer the argument it would have furnished in support of its endless duration! What stress would have been laid upon the word *surely*, and how often should we have

* Essay on the Duration of a Future State of Punishments and Rewards, p. 17.

heard it repeated in reply to every thing which might be advanced on the subject; yet we have the authority of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, for affirming that the argument would have been totally fallacious!

Since, then, we read of the everlasting, or æonian circumcising, and of the everlasting or æonian priesthood, it is evident that the term must have a limited signification; for we cannot possibly suppose these things to be endless, merely because they are said to be of æonian duration. The æon or age to which they related is gone; the æonian covenants and statutes are waxed old, and have disappeared, and Jesus Christ has introduced a new æon; but if we render the word *permanent*, *continual*, or *lasting*, we shall be able to attach a scriptural and consistent meaning to it in every passage in which it occurs. Thus we shall have a just conception of the continual covenants of circumcision and priesthood, which continued during the Jewish æon or age—of the continual hills, which will continue during the æon or age of the world—of the continual gospel, which will be preached during the æons or ages in which the Mediator is subjecting all things to himself, and reconciling them to the Father—and of continual punishment, which will be inflicted until the wise, necessary, and benevolent purposes of punishment are accomplished.

The same kind of observations may be applied to the phrases, *for ever*, and *for ever and ever*. *Eis aiona aionos*, *for ever*, is used to denote a limited period of duration in the following passages:—

Psalms, xxxvii. 29, 'The righteous shall dwell in the land *for ever*;' that is, from generation to generation.—Psalms, lxi. 8, 'I will sing praise to thy name *for ever*,' from one period of my life to another.—Psalms, cxxxii. 14, 'This is my rest *for ever*;' that is, from age to age.*

Eis ton aiona kai eis ton aiona tou aionos, *for ever and ever*, is employed to express limited duration in the following texts:—

'Psalms, xlviii. 14, "This God is our God *for ever and ever*;" that is, from age to age, for he has long ceased to be the God of the Jews in the sense here intended.—Psalms, cxix. 44, "So shall I keep thy law continually, *for ever and ever*; that is, through the several periods or ages of my life on earth."—Psalms, cxlv. 2, "I will praise thy name *for ever and ever*;" that is, through every period of my life.—Psalms, cxlv. 21, "Let all flesh bless his holy name *for ever and ever*;" that is, from age to age, or through every age.—Psalms, cxlviii. 6, "He hath established the heavens *for ever and ever*;" that is, through all ages.'*

'It is an observation of the utmost importance, that when *aion* or *aionios* are applied to the future punishment of the wicked, they are never joined to life, immortality, incorruptibility, but are always connected with fire, or with that punishment, pain, destruction or second death, which is effected by means of fire. Now, since fire, which consumes or decomposes other perishable bodies, is itself of a dissoluble or perishing nature, this intimates a limitation of the period of time.'*

It is probable, also, that one chief reason why the future punishment of the wicked is often denoted by the metaphor of fire, is because it was the agent which was generally employed in *purifying* other bodies.† Allusions are continually made in scripture to this property of fire. Malachi, iii. 2, 3, 'But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.'—Isaiah, xlviii. 10, 'Behold, I have refined thee. I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.'—Mark, ix. 49, 'For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.' In this passage, which itself relates to future punishment, the double metaphor of salt and fire appears to be used to signify the same thing, the corrective nature of punishment. 1 Peter, i. 7, 'That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ.' Allusion to this property of fire is also made in the following passages: Psalms, xii. 6, 'The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.' Matthew, iii. 11, 12, 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' The parallel passage in Luke, iii. 17,—Revelations, iii. 18, 'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.'

It appears, then, that, since the terms *aion* and *aionios* are constantly applied to things which either have perished, or which must be destroyed, no argument can fairly be deduced from their use alone, in proof of the absolute eternity of future punishment; even although it should be allowed that some passages in which they occur denote duration without end.‡ Before their application to *this* subject

* See Simpson's Essay, pp. 17, 18.

* See Simpson's Essay, p. 22.

† It is true this metaphor is very frequently used to signify indignation and anger, as in Revelation, xiv. 10, and Hebrews, x. 27; but the passages quoted above prove that it is also employed to denote the corrective nature of punishment.

‡ That they are sometimes *connected with subjects* which have an endless duration, must be admitted; for example, in some passages which relate to the glory of God—Romans, xvi. 27, 'To the only wise God be glory, *eis tous aionas*, *for ever*.'—1 Peter, iv. 11, 'That by Jesus Christ God may be glorified, to whom be glory and dominion, *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, *for ever and ever*.'—1

can be conclusive, it must be shown, that there is something in the nature of punishment which requires, that, whenever they are annexed to it, they must necessarily denote endless duration—a task which it is not easy to accomplish, and the very attempt at which seems absurd; but, even if it could be accomplished, it would prove, not that the nature of these terms gives the sense of eternity to punishment, but that the nature of punishment imparts it to these terms.

This foundation, then, of the doctrine of Endless Misery, and of Limited Punishment terminated by destruction, is unstable and insufficient. These terms cannot establish the doctrine, that future punishment will be followed by a total extinction of conscious existence, because the only way in which they could favour this opinion would be by proving that the *loss* sustained by the wicked is truly everlasting, and that in this most important sense their punishment may be said to be without end; but it has been shown, that these words do not prove the endless duration of punishment. Still less do they favour the doctrine of Endless Misery; for, although the absolute eternity of punishment were fully established, it would by no means follow, that this punishment consists of unremitted and insupportable torments, because the substantive connected with the adjective, which is translated eternal, does not signify misery, but punishment. It is not said that the wicked shall go away into everlasting torment; and, though the term everlasting is connected with the metaphor of fire, yet this metaphor may signify something else besides *misery*, as has already been shown; and at all events, to attempt to establish such a tremendous doctrine, merely upon a figurative expression, is unwarrantable.

But, though this word, when applied to future punishment, does not denote duration without an end, yet it is expressive of a period, to the length of which we can set no limits, and which no thoughtful mind can contemplate without dismay. To the impenitent and obdurate sinner, who, in the midst of light and knowledge, with clear conceptions of his duty, and strong convictions of his obligations to obey it, has lived without God in the world, violated the laws of morality and religion, outraged the best affections of the heart, and trampled on the dearest interests of mankind, there must be a day of awful retribution. Though we cannot conceive more nobly of the Deity, than to suppose that benignity constitutes the essence of his nature, yet, from this very circumstance, he must punish the wicked with a necessary degree of severity. They carry in their own breast the sentence of condemnation; they feel within themselves a terrible consciousness, that they must suffer the just judgment of their crimes, and the dictate of their heart is the voice of God, announcing to them their future destiny. They cannot be happy. Were a seat prepared for them at the right hand of God, were angels and archangels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, to encircle them, and were the most rapturous joys of heaven offered to their acceptance, they would still be wretched. The very bosom of enjoyment would be to them a thorny pillow; for the turbulence of malignant passion would even there disturb their repose. Like those miserable pageants of grandeur, who live in gorgeous palaces, and whom mirth and joy encircle, while some foul crime weighs heavy on their conscience, the paleness of whose cheek the surrounding splendour does but deepen, and whose quivering lip moves but the more tremulously for the pleasure which invites their participation—anguish and despair are in their hearts.

Every fault we commit *must* involve us in suffering. Misconduct and misery are connected together by a law as steady and invariable in its operation as that which regulates the motions of the planets. If we die without having acquired virtuous and pious habits, and with hearts attached to criminal pleasures, there is no alternative; we must necessarily suffer an anguish, which both reason and revelation assure us must in every case be dreadful, but the degree and the duration of which can be determined only by the nature, the number, and the aggravation of our sins.

With an evidence which no reasonable mind can resist, and with deep and impressive solemnity, the scriptures assure us, that after death cometh the judgment—that all mankind must appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ—that they must be judged according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or evil—that the virtuous of every nation, kindred, people, and religion, shall be admitted to a state of pure and exalted happiness, where all their faculties shall be enlarged, where every object calculated to exercise and satisfy them shall abound, where every natural and moral imperfection, and therefore every painful sensation, shall be for ever excluded, and where, existing in immortal vigour, they shall be continually rising higher and higher in the scale of excellence and enjoyment, till they attain a measure of both, which at present we can neither calculate nor comprehend. But they assure us, too, that the wicked shall be doomed to a state of suffering, awful in its nature, and lasting in its duration—that they shall be excluded from the habitations of the just—that between them and the virtuous a great gulf shall be fixed—that no song of joy shall be heard in these regions of remorse—that weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, shall be there, and that the recollection of the sins they have committed, the mercies they have abused, and the privileges they have lost, shall fill them with intolerable anguish.

Timothy, vi. 16, 'To him who only hath immortality, be honour and dominion, *aionion*, *everlasting*'—and in some passages which relate to the nature of the Divine Being, Romans, xvi. 26, 'According to the commandment, *tou aionion. Theou*, *of the everlasting God.*' But it is evident, that in these passages these words do not give the sense of endless to, but receive it from, the subject to which they are applied.

The doctrine of Universal Restoration not only teaches these solemn and momentous truths, but inculcates them in a manner the best adapted to convince the understanding, and to affect the heart. It is not this doctrine, therefore, which cries to those who are at ease in Zion, 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace;' it is not this doctrine which says to the wicked, 'Ye shall not surely die'—which relaxes the ties of moral obligation, or promises an exemption from punishment, whatever dispositions are indulged, or whatever crimes are committed.

With a solemnity peculiar to itself, it assures the wicked that they can enjoy no rest—that they must be miserable as long as they are criminal; and, if there be any thing affecting in tenderness, or persuasive in benignity, that doctrine must have a peculiarly moral tendency, which inculcates, that the suffering they endure will induce an abhorrence of its cause, and that, purified from sin, repentant and reclaimed, in love with holiness and goodness, and looking with humble, penitent, and supplicating hearts, to the Father of mercies, for forgiveness, he will have compassion upon them, speak to them the words of peace, and take them to his bosom as his children—that even as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord will have compassion upon them that fear him, knowing their frame, and remembering that they are but dust.

'I have taken no pleasure in your suffering,' may we conceive our heavenly Father to say to his penitent children, when the discipline under which he will place them shall have accomplished its design. 'I have chastised you only with a view to correct the evil which was in you. You feel and deplore your error. You are fitted to partake of true happiness. Come, then, for there is room; "This, my son, was dead and is alive, was lost and is found!"'

If at that moment this reclaimed child should have the feelings of a man, and testify in human language the sensations of his soul, will he not fall down before this most lovely Being, and, in a rapture of adoring gratitude, exclaim, 'Thy wisdom and thy goodness have prevailed. With penitence I return unto thee, from whom I ought never to have departed. Father, receive thy child. The eternity of happiness thou givest me shall speak thy praise.'

What a memorable and affecting spectacle must such a reconciliation afford to the whole rational creation! How great must be its moral influence! How much better must it answer all the purposes of justice, as well as benevolence, than the condemnation of millions of millions of rational beings to a total loss of conscious existence, or to the endurance of the most excruciating torments, which can accomplish no possible end, except that of sinking the unhappy victims deeper and deeper in sin and misery! Which spectacle is most worthy of the God of love, and in which is most apparent the finger of infinite wisdom, power, and benevolence?

SECTION II.

Of the Application of the same Word to the Happiness of the Righteous, and the Punishment of the Wicked.

Since it is evident, that the terms eternal, everlasting, for ever and ever, denote a limited duration, and therefore that their application to future punishment cannot prove its absolute eternity, it is farther urged, in support of the doctrines of Endless Misery, and of Limited Punishment terminated by destruction, that the same word is applied both to the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked, and that, as in the one case this term is always supposed to convey the idea of happiness without end, so in the other it must, in all fair and reasonable construction, be allowed to denote endless loss or suffering.

The proper and full reply to this objection is, that the application of *aionios*, to the happiness of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked, cannot of itself prove the absolute eternity of either. If the endless duration of the happiness of the righteous be established beyond doubt, the proof is derived from other sources, and does not depend upon this term.

The passage on which the present objection is chiefly founded occurs in Matthew, xxv. 46, 'And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' Although the same word is here employed to express the duration both of future reward and punishment, yet the difference between the nature of the two subjects, the difference between the substantives to which the adjective is applied, and the clear testimony of other passages of scripture, which relate to the final destiny of mankind, all concur to show, that in the former case it signifies an endless, and in the latter a limited, duration.

There is the greatest possible difference between the nature of the subjects to which the term is applied. When an everlasting life of happiness is promised to the righteous, the subject naturally leads us to believe that its duration will be without end, because we can conceive of nothing which should bring it to a termination. There is every reason to believe that the same motive which induced the Deity to impart it for a very protracted period will lead him to render it endless. The happiness of which the pious will be in possession in a future state is the attainment of the object for which they were created—the completion of the design of their existence. As long as they continue to enjoy, they promote the benevolent purpose of their Creator, and therefore their felicity has in itself the promise of immortality. Happiness, too, is an eternal principle; it is coeval with the Deity, and will be lasting as himself. But misery is in every respect the reverse. It is not the object for which mankind were brought into being; its prevalence is not the fulfilment of the designs of the Deity. As long as it exists, his purposes cannot be completed. It is not itself an end; it is only the means to an end, which alone is sufficient to prove that it cannot be

eternal, but must cease as soon as it has accomplished its allotted work. There is, therefore, such a difference between the nature of happiness and misery, as necessarily leads to the conclusion, that their duration will be different. The term, *aionios*, applied to the first, *derives from it* the signification of endless duration; applied to the second, it is *restricted* by it to a limited period.

There is an equal difference between the nature of the substantives to which this word is applied. Thus, in this very passage, when it relates to the righteous, it is connected with *zoe*, a substantive which signifies life; when it respects the wicked, it is joined with *kolasis*, a term which invariably denotes *corrective* punishment.* That the phrase, everlasting, or continual life, when applied to the pious, may signify an immortal existence, it is reasonable to believe, because the nature of the subject countenances the opinion, and it is favoured by many passages of scripture. That the expression, everlasting punishment, or lasting correction, when applied to the wicked, denotes a limited punishment, it is impossible to deny, because a corrective cannot be an endless punishment—because the very hypothesis is incompatible with the design of the divine government—because it is contrary to the general tenor of the New Testament, and because it deprives many of its most striking and animating expressions of all their beauty and truth.

Nor does the affixing of a different meaning to the same word, occurring twice in the same sentence, afford any objection to this interpretation. The difference in the subject in the one case and the other is so manifest, as clearly to point out its different signification; so that, if the scriptures afford no example of a similar repetition of the same word in a twofold sense, it ought not to induce the least doubt of the validity of the principle upon which the distinction in the present passage is established. But the fact is, that there are several places in which the same word is applied twice in the same sentence, with a dissimilarity as to the extent of duration denoted by it, exactly similar to this. For example, Habakkuk, iii. 6, 'And the *everlasting* mountains were scattered, and the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are *everlasting*.' In this passage, the same word is applied to the duration of mountains and to the duration of the ways of God. In the latter part of the sentence it signifies absolute eternity; in the former it must denote limited duration. This passage affords another striking illustration of the principle, that it is the nature of the subject, in relation to which the term *aionios* is used that determines the length of duration it must be understood to denote. When it relates to the Deity, it derives from his nature the sense of absolute eternity; when it expresses the duration of mountains, it is restricted by their nature to a limited signification.

Romans, xvi. 25, 26, 'According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret, *chronois aioniois*, in the times of the ages, but has now been made manifest, according to the commandment, *tou aionion Theou*, of the everlasting God.'—Titus, i. 2, 'In hope, *zoes aionious*, of *eternal* life, which God, who cannot lie, promised,' *pro chronon aionion*, *before the times of the ages*, or *before the world began*, or *before the ancient dispensations*.

These examples are abundantly sufficient to prove, that the argument in support of the endless duration of punishment, founded upon *this* application of the term, is also fallacious.

SECTION III.

Of the Argument in Favour of Endless Misery, Derived from the Phrase, Unquenchable Fire.

The following passages have been deemed decisive proofs of the endless duration of the misery of the wicked:—

Matthew, xxv. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, *eis to pur to aionion*, into eternal or lasting fire.'—Jude, 7, 'As Sodom and Gomorrha are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance, *puros aioniou*, of eternal fire.' This fire has been extinguished long ago.—Matthew, iii. 12, 'But he will burn the chaff, *puri asbesto*, with unquenchable fire.'—Mark, ix. 43–49, 'And if thy hand cause thee to offend, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, *into the fire that shall never be quenched*, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot cause thee to offend, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, *into the fire that never shall be quenched*. And if thine eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire, *where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*; for every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.'

It is argued, that our Lord in this passage repeats five times, that the fire into which the wicked are cast shall never be quenched—that three times he speaks of hell, as a place where the worm dieth not, and that, still farther to show the perpetuity of the sufferings of the wicked, he adds, 'for every one shall be salted with fire.' As it is the property of salt to preserve, it is argued, that the inference justly deducible from this awful intimation is, that this fire, while it torments its unhappy victims, shall not put a period to their existence, but, contrary to its natural effect, continue them in being.

* 'The word here rendered punishment properly signifies correction for the benefit of the offender, and the word translated everlasting is often used to express a long, but indefinite duration. This text, therefore, so far from giving countenance to the harsh doctrine of eternal misery, is rather favourable to the more pleasing and more probable hypothesis of the ultimate restitution of the wicked to virtue and to happiness.'—*Improved Version*, note in loc.

A careful examination of this passage will show that this argument is founded upon a false interpretation of the metaphors which are here employed, and that it is altogether fallacious. Jesus speaks of the wicked as being cast into the valley of Hinnom, into the unquenchable fire, where the worm dieth not. Yet 'in the valley of Hinnom the worm died when its food failed, and the pile on which human sacrifices were burnt to Moloch was often extinguished.'—*Newcome.*

'These emblematical images, expressing hell, were in use among the Jews before our Saviour's time. The son of Sirach says, vii. 7, "The vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms."—Judith, xvi. 17, "The Lord will take vengeance on the nations, &c., in the day of judgment, in putting fire and worms in their flesh."'—*Lowth's Note on Isaiah*, lxvi. 24.

When it is said that every one shall be salted with fire, or every sacrifice is salted with salt, this is to be understood, 'not literally as the law requires, Leviticus, ii. 13, but figuratively, with the salt of divine assistance and instruction. Salt, being a preservative of food from hasty corruption, was among the Jews an emblem of virtue and knowledge, by which the mind is purified. Colossians, iv. 7, "Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt."'—*Newcome.*

That the phrase, *unquenchable fire*, upon which so much stress is always laid, in the argument for Endless Misery, does not denote a fire which shall never cease, is most certain. The following passages afford irresistible evidence, that it is constantly used in the scriptures in a limited sense:—

Jeremiah, xvii. 27, 'But if ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burthen, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, *then will I kindle fire in the gates thereof*, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, AND IT SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED.' Yet the same prophet predicts that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, chap. xxx. 18, &c.

Ezekiel, xx. 45–48, 'Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face towards the south, and say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the Lord. Behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree, THE FLAMING FLAME SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burned therein, and all flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it; IT SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED.'

If it be supposed, that these menaces were actually executed upon Jerusalem, and that, when this devoted city was destroyed, the prophecy was literally accomplished, it must be admitted, that the fire which consumed it is already extinguished, and that, therefore, the scriptural meaning of an unquenchable fire is not one which has no termination. If these dreadful threatenings be more justly considered as figurative, it must be allowed, that they express the divine displeasure, and the severity of the punishment which is inflicted on the disobedient, but not that they determine any thing relative to its duration.

Isaiah, xxxiv. 9–11, 'And the streams thereof (of the land of Idumea) shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. IT SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED NIGHT NOR DAY; *the smoke thereof shall go up for ever*: from generation to generation it shall be waste, none shall pass through it *for ever*. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it: the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stone of emptiness.'

No fire with which the wicked are threatened is expressed in language so strong as this; yet it is obvious, that this phraseology cannot denote a fire which shall never end; for, if any one can believe that Idumea was really turned into pitch and brimstone, and set on fire, yet it is impossible to suppose that it will continue burning through the ages of eternity; and, if the denunciation be interpreted in a figurative sense, the calamities it threatens must be understood to be of a temporal nature, and therefore of limited duration.

Simpson concludes his examination of the term *pur*, fire, in general, and of these passages in particular, with the following admirable observations:—

'*All* these several metaphors, by which future punishment is described, will not admit of being understood literally; for, if thus interpreted, some of them would clash with others. Nor is there any proper authority for taking any *one* of them in preference to the rest, and explaining them so as to accord with that which we select as the rule of interpretation. We are compelled, therefore, to look out for some key to the explanation of them all, so as to be consistent with each other. If any one of these figurative representations has united with it a plain term, that will accord not only with the single figure with which it is conjoined, but also with the various other figures that are employed upon this subject in the New Testament, and especially if it coincides with the actual explanation and use of the very same figures in the writings of the Jewish prophets, we may fairly interpret all the figurative expressions by this plain one.

'Now the words *anger* and *indignation*, that occur in Revelation, xiv. 10—Hebrews, x. 27, have a plain and distinct meaning. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." All the other terms that are employed to describe the grievous future punishment of the wicked are proper figurative representations of the dreadful effects of divine indignation against sinners; and, considered in this light, they entirely agree with each other. The Old Testament was both the religious and the civil code of the Jews, and the Greek translation of it was commonly used by them in the time of our Lord

and his apostles. They therefore adopted many expressions from the books contained in it. Now the Jewish prophets, it is well known, described the Deity himself, and all his operations and proceedings, in a bold and most highly figurative style. The similitudes which we are now considering, they often employed in representing the great displeasure of the Most High against sin, and the painful chastisement of death, that he will inflict *in this world*, upon those who transgress his laws and abuse his favours. The metaphors of fire, unquenchable fire, and their worm not dying, as well as other figures, are thus applied in the following texts, in which there are plain expressions, that lead to the true interpretation of the figurative:—

'Deuteronomy, xxxii. 22–25, "A fire is kindled in mine *anger*, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. I will heap mischiefs upon them: I will spend mine arrows upon them: they shall be burnt with hunger and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction; I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust; the sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of grey hairs."—Isaiah, lxvi. 14–16, "The *indignation* of Jehovah shall be known towards his enemies. For behold Jehovah will come with his fire and with his chariots, like a whirlwind, to render his *anger* with fury, and his rebuke like flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will Jehovah plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Ver. 24, "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: *for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched*, they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Here dead carcasses are spoken of, as being devoured by worms, or destroyed by fire. This, therefore, does not imply, but excludes the idea of their feeling pain. See also, Isaiah, v. 24, 25, xxx. 27–33, Psalms, lxxxix. 46, &c.

'From the above quotations out of the Old Testament, it appears that the metaphors in the New Testament, which we are considering, must, in the strongest sense, be understood of grievous suffering and destruction by death. The wicked, then, are described as dying again after severe punishment in the world to come. There is no passage in which it is said that they shall be immortal, or shall remain in a state of torment without dying. We have no sufficient ground, then, for maintaining that the punishment of sinners will have no termination, nor for affirming that the second death, which we are assured they shall undergo, will put a final period to their existence. These are conclusions upon which consequences of too great moment depend, to admit of their being deduced from figurative language alone. Plain and explicit terms seem indispensably requisite to justify such sentiments.'

SECTION IV.

Of the Argument in Favour of Endless Misery, Founded on the Case of Judas.

The language of our Lord, respecting the unhappy person who betrayed him, has been supposed to furnish a strong argument in support of the endless misery of the wicked. 'The Son of man goeth as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.' Matthew, xxvi. 24.

Should a period ever arrive, when Judas will be restored to happiness, our Lord, it is argued, could not with truth have affirmed, that it would have been good for him if he had not been born; because, though the suffering inflicted on him be ever so severe and protracted, if it be the means of correcting his evil disposition, and preparing him for immortal felicity, his existence must upon the whole be an incalculable blessing.

To this it is common to reply, and the answer is abundantly sufficient, that the language of our Lord is proverbial, and that no sober mind will venture to rest such a tremendous doctrine upon the solitary use of a Jewish proverb. The phrase is often used proverbially, both by sacred and profane authors. Simpson observes, that it is often found in the Talmudical writer. See *Wolfius'* and *Lightfoot's Note on Matthew*, xxvi. 24; also *Grotius in loco, et Alberti Observ. Philologicæ*, &c., who produce several instances of similar modes of expression. To the truth of these observations, Dr. Gill, who was certainly in no degree hostile to the doctrine of endless misery, or to any other orthodox opinion, bears his decided testimony. In his notes on this and the parallel passage in Mark, he says, 'This is a Rabbinical phrase, frequently used in one form or other, and sometimes as our Lord spake it. It is applied to such as speak false and lying words, and regard not the glory of their Creator.'*

That this kind of language was common among the Jews, we have abundant proof in several parts of scripture. Job, in the anguish of his heart, exclaims, 'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it, because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Then should I have been still and quiet. I should have slept.' Job iii. 3.

Jeremiah uses, if possible, still more strong

* The improved version gives, as a conjectural meaning of this phrase, 'It would have been good for him, (the traitor,) if that man (the Son of man) had never been born.'—*See note in loc.*

and bitter language. Jeremiah, xiv. 14–18,* 'Cursed be the day wherein I was born. Let not the day wherein my mother bore me be blessed. Cursed be the man that brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee, making him very glad. Let that man be as the cities which Jehovah overthrew and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning and the shouting at noon-tide, because he slew me not from the womb, or that my mother might have been my grave. Wherefore came I out from the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?'

If, then, Job could use such language, while enduring suffering which was indeed very severe, but which was only of a temporal nature, and which cannot be supposed to have arisen in any degree from the apprehension of endless misery, and if Jeremiah could adopt it for no other reason, than because he suffered a little disgrace in a good cause, with how much greater justice, and with what solemn and impressive energy, might our Lord apply it to Judas, whose crime was of so deep a dye, and whose punishment must necessarily be so great! Being acquainted with the Jewish scriptures, and accustomed to this kind of language, his hearers must often have heard similar expressions applied to persons whose sufferings were trifling compared with those of the traitor.

SECTION V.

Of the Argument in favor of Endless Misery, derived from the language which is used concerning the Sin against the Holy Ghost.

'WHEREFORE all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.' Matthew xii. 31, 32.

This passage has been supposed to afford a decisive argument in support of the endless duration of the punishment of the wicked; but, if this be the case, the proof must depend either upon the phrase, 'Whosoever speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him,' or upon that which immediately follows, 'neither in this world nor in the world to come.'

With regard to the first, it may be admitted, that this dreadful threatening will be executed to the very letter, and yet the concession will afford no proof of the endless duration of punishment. Whoever is guilty of this sin may not be forgiven; he may suffer all the punishment due to his crime; that punishment may be protracted and terrible, and yet it may not be endless, because it is one thing for punishment to be great and durable, and another to be without end. The reasoning which is founded upon this text, instead of establishing any thing, assumes the point in dispute. The passage is adduced to show that the punishment inflicted upon unpardoned sin is endless; yet all which it affirms, taken literally, and in its largest sense, is, that there is one sin which will not be forgiven; so that the precise thing to be proved, namely, that unpardoned sin will be punished with endless suffering, is taken for granted.

The phrase, 'neither in this age nor the age to come,' is so far from denoting endless duration, that it is itself a decisive proof, that expressions of this kind do not signify proper eternity; for, if the contrary be maintained, the correct rendering of this passage must be, neither in this eternity, nor in the eternity to come.

The language of our Lord in this text refers, without doubt, to the conduct of the Pharisees, who, when they could not deny the reality of his miracles, attributed the power by which he performed them, not to God, but to the agency of evil beings. He appeals to his works as a proof that he is come forth from God; but he is assisted by a very different being, say they: 'He casteth out demons by Beelzebub the prince of the demons.' Nothing could discover more shocking malignity. Now, says our Lord, every kind of calumny is a crime of great enormity, and pardoned by God with the utmost difficulty; but to speak evil of God himself, by attributing his beneficent and miraculous works to a wicked being, is an offence of the deepest dye, and much more difficult to be pardoned. This appears to be what our Lord affirms, and all which he affirms in this passage.

If this be a just interpretation of these words, they afford an example of a mode of expression which is very frequently employed by the Hebrews, and of which we have several instances in the scriptures. When they would say that one thing is more excellent, easy, or difficult, than another, they often positively affirm the one and deny the other. In this manner God is represented, Matthew ix. 13, as saying, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' meaning by this, not that sacrifices were in themselves disagreeable to him, but that acts of beneficence were more excellent and acceptable. So Matthew, chap. v. 18, says, 'Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall by no means pass away from the law, till all be accomplished,' which Luke explains, chap. xvi. 17, by saying, 'It is *easier* for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail.' In the same manner, Christ, in the text, seems to say, that every other kind of evil speaking may be forgiven, but that to speak evil of God or his spirit shall not be pardoned, when no more is intended, than that it is more difficult to obtain the forgiveness of the one offence than of the other.*

*See Blaney's note on this passage.

*See Kenrick's Exposition of the Historical Writings of the New Testament, note in loc.

There are other expositors, however, who plead for understanding these words literally, and suppose them to declare, that, to speak evil of the Spirit of God, in the manner before mentioned, is an unpardonable offence, either because the persons who are guilty of it, rejecting the evidence of miracles, resist the strongest motive to repentance, which God can give, or because the crime is of too enormous a nature to come within the reach of divine mercy. But it does not seem probable in itself, that any sin, committed by creatures of such limited capacities as we are, can be so heinous as to leave no hope of pardon, when sincerely repented of; nor does it appear that our Lord himself thought it impossible for the divine clemency to be extended to it; for, when he was put to death by the Pharisees, who had been guilty of this offence, he prays that God would forgive them; to which it may be added, that a few verses before we find these Pharisees ask for a sign, and Christ tells them that one shall be given them, even that of the prophet Jonas; but why should their request be granted, except for their conviction, that they might obtain forgiveness?*

The preceding observations are founded on the remark of Grotius on this passage, who says, 'Our Lord could not mean in the former part of the sentence, in which he speaks of other sins and blasphemies, to affirm absolutely, that they shall be forgiven without repentance, because this is not true; for many of them we are told will not be forgiven, but will incur their due punishment. Therefore this is a Hebrew form of speech, signifying that all other sins and blasphemies shall *sooner* be forgiven than the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. For it was common among the Jews to say, This thing shall be, and This shall not be, merely to express the greater difficulty of effecting the latter than the former, without affirming any thing absolutely of either.'

Whitby seems to think that the sin against the Holy Spirit probably refers to blaspheming the spirit which fell on the apostles at the day of Pentecost, (see Appendix to Matthew, xii.,) with whom Doddridge, on Matthew xii. 31, 32, agrees. If this opinion be well founded, it cannot be said that this sin shall not be forgiven, because those who had committed it were exhorted to repent, that they might obtain pardon. Acts ii. 13, 38, viii. 17–24.†

It is obvious, that the sin against the Holy Ghost consists in a wilful and obstinate ascription of the miraculous powers of Jesus Christ to demoniacal agency. 'Verily,' says our Lord, Mark iii. 28, 'all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgivness, but is in danger of eternal damnation; *because they said he had an unclean spirit.*'—Matthew xii. 24, 'This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons.' These last words place the matter beyond doubt.

He who, when he saw the miracles of Jesus, and could not resist the conviction that they were real, refused to yield to his authority, but attributed his works to the agency of demons, rejected the strongest possible evidence of the truth of his religion.* Refusing to profit by the best means which the wisdom of the Deity had devised to make him pure and happy, there was every reason to believe that he must leave this world utterly unprepared for the next, and suffer the penalty of unrepentant guilt, which will be the more dreadful, in that his eyes will be opened to all the enormity of his crime. This, indeed, will form a dreadful aggravation of the misery of the wicked in the state of punishment. At present, the mind has a wonderful power of changing at will the appearances of objects, so that it can bring itself to view even the most horrible crimes, not only without disgust, but with pleasure; but, in the state of discipline in which the Parent of mankind will hereafter place his offending offspring, this deceptive power will not be permitted to be exercised. The veil will be torn from every eye, and all objects will appear in their real colours. Then, it will not be Nero reflecting upon his crimes with the blunted feelings of the man who could cause hundreds of innocent beings to be wrapt in shirts of pitch, and, setting them on fire, mingle in the crowd of flaming victims, that he might have a nearer view of their anguish; but it will be Nero contemplating his wanton cruelty with the sensibility of Howard—with the just valuation of goodness of the apostle Paul. Is it possible to believe that this altered view and feeling will produce no beneficial effect—will excite no abhorrence of sin, no desire to burst from its thraldom and be free, or that, exciting such a dislike and wish, they will be forever unavailing?

The degree and the duration of punishment necessary to produce the salutary change must be different in different persons. The exact proportion it is the part of Infinite Wisdom to determine. No more than is requisite will be inflicted. As much as is necessary must be sustained. Some must be beaten with few, and others with many stripes; and we learn, from the passage we have been considering, that there is in the sin against the Holy Ghost a malignity which will render its eradication more difficult than that of any other crime. In the language which is used concerning it, there is much that is awful and affecting, but nothing that is impossible or irrational; and it is not for us, by giving a false interpretation of it, to render it both.

*See Kenrick, in loc.

†See Simpson's Ess. on Future Punishment, p. 80.

* 'They who ascribe the miracles of Jesus and his apostles to demoniacal agency, resisted the strongest possible evidence of the truth of the Christian religion, and were therefore incapable of being converted to the belief of it.'—*Improved version, in loc.*—See, also, Dr. Samuel Clark's paraphrase of this passage, and Macknight, in loc.

SECTION VI.

Of the Argument in Favour of Endless Misery, Deduced from the Parable of the Great Gulph.

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man has often been adduced in proof of the endless misery of the wicked. It is necessary, therefore, to notice it, though no intelligent person can lay much stress upon it. Abraham is represented as saying to the rich man, Luke xvi. 26, 'Between us and you there is a great gulph fixed, so that they which would pass from thence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.'

All which this passage proves is, that the righteous and the wicked will be placed in different states, and that one cannot pass to that of the other. Respecting the duration of these states, it determines nothing.

Indeed, the circumstances mentioned in the parable are favourable to the opinion, that future punishment will be corrective. The rich man is represented as enjoying many privileges which he abused. He had great wealth, but, like too many who are entrusted with this means of diffusing happiness, he possessed an unfeeling heart. There is no scriptural authority for representing him as utterly profligate and abandoned; and to give such an exhibition of his character is to pervert the design of this most instructive lesson, which is to admonish us, not that a monster of wickedness shall be punished in the other world, but that the man who, though not chargeable with doing much ill, does little or no good, and lives, though not perhaps an intemperate, a sensual life—who, careless about the situation of others, exists only for the indulgence of his own appetites, and his own vanity, shall not escape punishment.* The great vice of his character was the want of diffusive benevolence. He felt no compassion for the misery of others. Even though he saw a fellow-creature ready to perish with disease and hunger, it melted not his soul to charity. He dies, and is placed under the painful discipline which is necessary to change his selfish disposition. In hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torments. He supplicates for mercy; he prays that Lazarus may be sent to dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool his parched tongue; his request is refused; and, finding that he can obtain no mitigation of his own suffering, what does he next solicit? 'I pray that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'

The very disposition, then, for which he is punished, is already beginning to be rectified; the discipline under which he is placed is taking effect; he has ceased to care only for himself; a spark of benevolence is kindled in his heart. Instead of imbibing what is generally represented as the spirit of the devil and his angels, from having associated with them—instead of soliciting permission to go and beguile his brethren to this place of torment, he is animated by a disposition of the purest benevolence—he who a little while ago was so insensible to the suffering of others, that the extremes of disease and hunger could not excite in his bosom a single sensation of pity.

This parable, therefore, which does not allude to the duration of punishment, but which gives a just exhibition of the tendency of the chastisement of a wise and benevolent Being, countenances the doctrine, that the wicked will be ultimately restored to virtue and to happiness.

* See Campbell's note on this passage, in which will be found some excellent practical observations on this beautiful and impressive parable.

SECTION VII.

Of the Opinion, that there will be no Successive Duration in a Future State.

It is not easy to account for the general prevalence of the opinion, that time will end with the present state, and eternity commence with the next. The notion itself is very obscure. As far as it is intelligible, the common idea of eternity seems to be that of a vast gulph, in which day and night, time itself, and all successive duration, are swallowed up. With this is generally connected the opinion, that after this state commences every thing must continue as it is, without the possibility of change, and that therefore the wickedness and misery of the impenitent must necessarily remain unalterable.

There is, however, no reason to believe that successive duration will terminate with the present life. Indeed, it is by no means easy to conceive how there can be duration without succession; at all events, no one can form a clear conception of it; and, to ground such a doctrine as that of endless misery on a notion so unintelligible, can be justified by nothing but the extreme exigency of the case.

The only passage of scripture which seems to countenance this opinion, is Revelation, x. 6, 'The angel swore—that there should be time no longer.' But the context demonstrates that this language cannot signify that eternity shall commence, if by this he meant endless duration without succession; for in the very next verse another angel is spoken of as succeeding the sixth, in terms which are incompatible with this idea. Ver. 7, 'But *in the days* of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished.'

The phrase in the received text is *ouk estai eti*; the reading of the Alexandrian, Ephrem, and other approved MSS., adopted by Greisbach, is *onketi estai*. The Improved Version renders the passage in the following manner:—ver. 5–7, 'And the angel whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the land, lifted up his right hand to heaven, and sware by him who liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things which are therein, and the earth and the things which are therein, and the sea and the things which are therein, *that the time would not be yet*, but *in the days* of the blast of the seventh angel, when he

shall sound his trumpet, and the mystery of God hath been finished, as he hath proclaimed the glad tidings to his servants the prophets.'

Wakefield renders the passage, 'that there should be no longer delay,' with whom Dr. Gill agrees, who gives the following exposition of the text: 'The words will bear to be rendered, as some have observed, that there should be delay no longer; that is, no delay of the coming and kingdom of Christ; though the bridegroom has tarried, he will come, and will not tarry beyond the time the angel swears to. Every seal of the sealed book, chap. v. 1, is a delay of and stop upon the open appearance of Christ's kingdom; and the opening of every seal is an advance to it. And, when the sixth seal was opened, and Paganism destroyed, and Christianity spread throughout the empire, the kingdom of Christ might have appeared; but there was a seventh seal to be opened, which was a stop upon it, and which, when opened, brought ruin and destruction upon the Christian empire, both western and eastern, under the six first trumpets; and till the seventh sounds there will be a delay of Christ's kingdom; but when that sounds there will be no more delay.'

The language of scripture is directly hostile to the notion, that in a future state there will be no successive duration. The Greek phrases, by which the duration of a future state is expressed, necessarily imply it; as, *eis aiona, for an age; eis tous aionas ton aionon, for ages of ages, &c.*

Such are the passages which are commonly adduced from scripture, in proof of the endless misery of the wicked. Those which have been considered are all that are generally deemed conclusive or important. However frequently they may be repeated, or confidently urged they are totally insufficient to establish this gloomy and unscriptural opinion.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE ARGUMENTS CONCEIVED TO FAVOUR THE DOCTRINE OF ENDLESS MISERY, WHICH ARE NOT FOUNDED ON THE EXPRESS DECLARATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

SECTION I.

Of the Infinite Evil of Sin.

ONE of the arguments urged in support of the doctrine of endless misery is so obviously fallacious, that it scarcely deserves a serious consideration; namely, that sin is an infinite evil, and therefore deserves an infinite punishment.

That sin is not only an evil, but the greatest which can possibly attach to a moral and accountable being, is an indisputable truth; but that the slightest transgression is an infinite offence, and deserves an infinite punishment, are positions to which neither reason nor revelation afford the shadow of support.

The advocates of this extraordinary opinion endeavour to establish it, by an argument no less singular than the doctrine itself. Sin, say they, is an infinite evil because it is committed against an infinite person. The heinousness of an offence, they contend, increases in proportion to the dignity of the personage against whom it is committed; hence, a crime against a king is always visited with greater severity of punishment than an offence against an ordinary person. Since, therefore, God is infinite, and since every sin is an offence against God, every sin is an infinite evil.

The full reply to this reasoning is, that it is not rank and station which aggravate a crime, but its tendency to occasion misery. An offence against a king, it is true, is of a greater magnitude, and is punished with more severity than the injurious treatment of an ordinary person; but the reason is, that an offence against a king is likely to be attended with worse consequences than one against a private individual. If a king be treated with insult or injustice, a whole nation may be injured and thrown into commotion. In the one case, the evil attaches to a single individual; in the other, to millions of persons. In the one case, therefore, it is as much greater than the other, as the sum of an evil which extends to millions exceeds that which attaches only to a single individual.

Besides, were sin an infinite evil, there could be no degree in transgression; for, when speaking of infinity, it is absurd to talk of greater or less. All human actions, therefore —all the language of mankind, all laws, human and divine, and all punishments, contradict this opinion; for they all proceed upon the principle, that some crimes are of greater magnitude than others. We know, too, that the Deity distinguishes in the most exact manner between different offences—that he apportions to each an equitable degree of punishment, and that he who has sinned greatly shall be beaten with many, and he who has offended less, with fewer stripes.

Indeed, it is when we consider the minute shades by which different sins and even different characters, are discriminated, that we perceive in the most forcible manner the impossibility both of the doctrine of endless misery, and of limited punishment terminated by destruction. How slight is the difference between the worst good man and the best wicked man! How impossible is it for the utmost exertion of human sagacity to distinguish between them! Yet, for this imperceptible difference in character, there is, according to these doctrines, an infinite difference in destiny! He who is lowest in the scale of goodness, and who differs from the best wicked man only by the slightest shade, is admitted to infinite happiness. He in whom wickedness preponderates upon the whole, but in so small a measure that no human penetration can discern it, is shut out from the enjoyment of heaven—doomed by one doctrine to inconceivable torments through endless ages, and by the other to dreadful suffering for a very

protracted period, and then to endless extinction of being. According to one opinion, the positive *torment*, according to the other, the positive *loss*, is infinite; yet the difference in desert is indistinguishable! This is a disproportion to which there is no parallel in any of the works of the Deity, and which cannot exist, it is reasonable to believe, in any of his dispensations.

SECTION II.

Of the Argument in favor of Endless Misery, Founded on the Divine Justice.

As the Author of the beautiful system of the universe must possess almighty power and infinite wisdom, so He must be endowed with every moral excellence. He who gave to all things the relations they possess must be perfectly acquainted with them; and, since he cannot possibly err, nor have any motive to commit injustice, he must always act with undeviating rectitude.

Justice is one of those virtues which are essential to the perfection of the moral character. The intercourses of society could not subsist without it, and it is peculiarly necessary in a governor and judge. It is therefore, with the greatest propriety, attributed to the wise and benevolent Ruler of the world.

Yet, while it is universally admitted, that the Deity possesses this excellence in the highest perfection, many persons entertain very erroneous ideas respecting it. It is usual to speak of it as a stupendous and awful attribute, inexplicable in its nature, terrible in its consequences, and possessing little in common with the virtue of justice among mankind. It is represented as contrary in its nature to goodness, and all the use which is made of it, in favour of the doctrine of endless misery, must proceed upon this presumption; for, if it be of the same nature as benevolence, it can no more oppose the final restoration of all mankind, than goodness itself.

To show the fallacy of the distinction which many persons endeavour to establish between the justice and goodness of God, it is sufficient to observe, that the Deity cannot possess two attributes of an opposite nature to each other —that all his perfections harmonize—that they have all one origin and one object—that that origin is benevolence, and that object the diffusion of happiness; but, as there is no attribute concerning which such vague and mistaken notions are entertained, and as these opinions necessarily affect the view which is taken of the most interesting doctrines, it is of great importance to establish precise and just conceptions respecting it.

The misapprehension which has prevailed relative to this subject has arisen chiefly from the opinion, that justice in God is of a different nature from this excellence in man. But, as we have no idea of the divine goodness, except from those indications of it which are similar to the appearances that prove the benignity of human beings, so we can have no conception of the divine justice, if it do not resemble that quality which, in the intercourse of men with each other, is distinguished by this term.

Man does not stand alone in the creation. He bears certain relations to his fellow-beings. From these arise certain duties, the exact performance of which constitutes the virtue termed justice. To the several relations of father, brother, husband, citizen, magistrate, judge, pertain appropriate duties, and when a person uniformly and faithfully discharges them, we say that he is just.

And though it is true, that the term justice is sometimes used in a more restricted sense, to express one particular duty, yet it is often employed even in a still more extensive acceptation than that which is here assigned. It frequently comprehends not only the duties which we owe to our fellow-creatures, but those also which relate to ourselves and to God. In this sense it is often used in scripture, as in the following passages:—

Proverbs, iii. 33, 'He blesseth the habitation of the just.' iv. 18, 'The path of the just is as the shining light.' x. 7, 'The memory of the just is blessed.' xvii. 26, 'To punish the just is not good.'—Hebrews, ii. 4, 'The just shall live by faith.'—Luke, ii. 25, "Simeon was just and devout.' xiv. 14, 'Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' In all these places, it is obvious that the term just is used to express general excellence of character.

In common language, however, it is more frequently employed to denote the faithful discharge of social duties—more commonly still to signify the treatment of men according to their character and desert, without regard to their persons or station—in which sense it stands opposed to partiality—and, perhaps, most commonly of all, to express the equitable punishment of the guilty.

As men are connected wrth their fellow-beings, so the Deity bears a certain relation to men. He is their Creator, their Parent, their Moral Governor, and their Judge. When we say that *he* is just, we can mean no more than that he is guided in his conduct towards his creatures by a principle similar in its nature to the virtue of justice among mankind; that, as their Creator, for example, he makes a provision for their comfortable existence; as a Parent, he satisfies their returning wants, and teaches them the lessons of wisdom and virtue; as their Moral Governor, he rules them according to the principles of perfect equity and benevolence; and as their Judge, he treats them with the utmost exactness, according to wise and salutary laws, without partiality.

Perhaps, however, it will lead to a more precise and accurate conception of the only real difference in this principle, as a divine and a human excellence, to say that justice in man is the rendering to every person that which is his due: and that justice in God is the treatment of every person in the manner which is best suited to his moral state.

When it is affirmed, that this principle, as

a human excellence, consists in rendering to every person that which is his due, this definition is meant to include, not only what the laws of the state and the institutions of society require, but also what humanity, conscience, and religion enjoin. The just man is he who, not limiting himself to the demands of any prescribed law, does good to the utmost extent of his judgment and ability.

But because he has neither the wisdom invariably to discern what is best adapted to the moral condition of his fellow-beings, nor the power always to modify his conduct according to it, even though he should clearly perceive it, it is not proper to make this the rule of his actions. Such a rule is applicable only to him who possesses the attribute of omniscience, and who has in his own hand the issues of events.

It is evident that the distinction which is here made between this principle, as it exists in the Deity and in man, arises not from any difference in the nature of the virtue in the one being and in the other, but solely in the degree in which they possess it—the one enjoying it in absolute perfection, the other only in a limited measure.

Dr. Edwards gives the following account of justice:* Sometimes, he says, it means commutative justice, sometimes, distributive, and sometimes general, or public justice. Commutative justice he defines, the equal exchange and restitution of property; distributive justice, the equal distribution of rewards and punishments; general, or public justice, the maintenance of the rights of a community, whether a city, state, empire, or the universe. This last he considers, though a frequent, an improper use of the word, because justice in this sense is the same with benevolence.

In the inquiry, whether the endless punishment of the wicked be consistent with justice, he observes, the word justice does not mean commutative justice, because the inquiry has no respect to property, nor does it mean general or public justice; for, though it be important to examine whether the endless punishment of the sinner dying in impenitence be consistent with the general interest of the universe, yet that is a different question; but it signifies distributive justice; and the precise inquiry is, whether to inflict an endless punishment on the sinner dying in impenitence, be a treatment of him by his Judge, correspondent, and no more than correspondent, to his demerit, or to his moral conduct and personal character. He proceeds to state, that a just punishment is that which is proportioned to the crime punished, and that a punishment may be said to be proportioned to the crime punished, when, by the pain or natural evil of the punishment, it exhibits a just idea of the moral evil or vicious tendency of the crime, and a proper motive to restrain all intelligent beings from the commission of it. He infers that the infliction of endless misery is such a punishment, but he advances no argument to prove it. He grounds the justice of such punishment on the nature of sin, which he holds to be an infinite evil, the proof of which he does not himself state, but considers it sufficiently established by his father and other writers on that side. This, indeed, is the only argument ever alleged to prove that the infliction of endless misery is consistent with the divine justice; and, as this is a point of great importance, it may be proper to state the argument in the words of its chief advocate.

'I shall show,' says the author of the Discourse on the Eternity of Hell Torments,* 'that it is not inconsistent with the justice of God to inflict an eternal punishment. To evince this, I shall use only one argument, namely, that sin is heinous enough to deserve such punishment, or such a punishment is no more than proportionable to the demerit of sin. If the evil of sin be infinite, as the punishment is, then it is manifest, that the punishment is no more than proportionable to the sin punished, and therefore is no more than sin deserves. The eternity of the punishment of ungodly men renders it infinite, and it renders it no more than infinite, and therefore no more than proportionable to the heinousness of the guilt. Sin, then, being an infinite evil, deserves an infinite punishment; such punishment, therefore, is just, which was the thing to be proved.'

It has already been shown, that sin is not an infinite evil; the only argument on which the justice of the eternity of punishment is founded is therefore fallacious. Some persons, indeed, believe in the eternity of punishment, who do not believe in the infinity of the evil of sin, but they differ from this author only in believing without any reason, what he believed for an insufficient reason.

In the nature of things, sin cannot deserve an infinite punishment; it has no attribute of infinity. It is the act of a finite being, and therefore cannot be infinite in magnitude. It is limited to the duration of a few years, and therefore can bear no proportion to eternity. Between a punishment extending through eternity, and sin committed in that brief period of time which constitutes the present life, there is just the same disproportion that there is between eternity and time. Admitting, therefore, according to Dr. Edwards' own definition, that a just punishment is that which is proportioned to the crime punished, it follows, that the infliction of misery without end, for the sin committed in so brief a period as this mortal life, is not only unjust, but unjust beyond all measure and bound.

Dr. Edwards endeavours to show that this argument is not conclusive, because it proves too much, since it supposes that no crime can be justly punished for a longer period than was consumed in the perpetration of it. He

*Salvation of all men strictly examined, &c., chap. iv.

* Edwards on the Eternity of Hell Torments, pp. 3, 4—the Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners, &c., p. 4.

maintains that if it be once allowed, that a crime may be punished for a longer time than was consumed in the perpetration of it, the whole argument that a creature cannot in a finite life commit such sin as shall deserve an endless punishment, must be given up—that, if a person may in one day commit a crime worthy of a punishment that shall continue a year, he may in one day commit a crime worthy of a punishment that shall continue two years, or ten years, or during his whole life—that, therefore, in determining the duration of punishment, no regard at all is paid to the time taken up in the perpetration of the crime—and that, if no regard be paid to this, there is no absurdity in supposing that the crimes of a finite life may deserve an endless punishment.

It is true, that, in apportioning punishment to crime, less attention is paid to the time consumed in the commission of it, than perhaps to any other circumstance; yet it is not correct to state that no attention is paid to it; for a crime which is committed in a very short space of time is generally considered less heinous than one which requires many months or years to consummate it. All the other circumstances of a crime remaining the same, the length of time required to perpetrate it is itself considered an aggravation of it; not, indeed, simply because so much time has been spent in the commission of the evil deed, but because, in proportion as the time is lengthened, the opportunities for reflection are supposed to be multiplied. It is therefore considered as implying a more fixed determination to evil, to continue in the commission of it a very long, than a very short period. But the true principle on which alone punishment can be apportioned to crime is the sum of evil produced or likely to be produced, by the criminal action. A crime deserves punishment in proportion, and only in proportion, as it tends to produce misery. This must regulate both the degree and the duration of all punishment that is just. The duration of punishment, it is true, is of no consequence, except as it influences the amount of punishment. However long it last, it is not unjust, provided the punishment upon the whole be not excessive. But for this very reason it is, that the infliction of endless misery, for the sins of the present life, is utterly inconsistent with justice, because, whatever be the amount of misery which those sins may deserve, provided they do not deserve infinite misery, (and that they do not deserve infinite misery has already been shown,) a period must come, in the ages of eternity, when that amount will have been exceeded, even though the suffering endured at any particular period be inconsiderable. The collective sum of misery endured through a successive but interminable series of ages, however small the actual suffering at any one period, must at length exceed what any one can conceive the sins of the present life to deserve; and of this the conviction would be inevitable and universal, were it possible to present that collective sum distinctly before the mind—to compare the amount of the suffering with the number and magnitude of the offences. It is when the mind does contemplate what the sins of the present life are, and what misery without end is, and does compare the one with the other, that it perceives clearly, that, were every moment of human life, from the cradle to the grave, devoted to the perpetration of the most horrible crimes, it would be utterly inconsistent with justice, to visit them with endless misery; because the amount of misery produced by all the crimes which it would be possible to crowd into this short space of existence could bear no manner of comparison to that which would ultimately be produced by such a punishment. If a person, for stealing from his neighbour the sum of one guinea, were made positively miserable seventy years, every one would acknowledge that the punishment was greater than the crime deserved, and was therefore unjust; but the infliction of positive misery seventy years, for the crime of stealing one guinea, is mildness and mercy, compared with the infliction of positive misery through the never-ending ages of eternity, for the crimes of seventy years. Even admitting, therefore, that, in apportioning punishment to crime, no regard is to be paid to the time spent in the commission of the crime, yet regard must be paid to the time spent in suffering the punishment, otherwise the amount of the punishment may become most excessive, and therefore most unjust. For, though the mere duration of punishment may be of no importance, so long as the whole punishment is not excessive, yet it may become excessive, from the very circumstance of its protracted duration.

Nor is it possible in this argument to separate the idea of punishment from that of the duration of it. It has been said* that the advocates for endless punishment do not contend that sin deserves an infinite degree of endless punishment—that they do not pretend to determine the degree of punishment it deserves, and that it becomes all to leave that to God, who alone can determine it; but the truth is, that the doctrine of endless misery does determine the degree of misery which sin deserves, at least to the extent of deciding that it deserves an infinite degree of misery; for the amount of misery ultimately endured, if it be without end, whatever be the degree of suffering experienced at any given period, must be infinite. And the representations which the advocates of the doctrine of endless misery uniformly give, of the sufferings of the wicked in a future state, decidedly prove, that in their conception future punishment will be infinite in degree as well as in duration. What words can show this more strongly than the passage which has already been cited from the Discourse on the Eternity of Hell Torments! In that passage, the author represents the wicked as spending thousands and thousands of ages in pain, in wailing and la-

* Salvation of all men strictly examined, &c., chap. iv. p. 107.

menting, groaning, and shrieking, and gnashing their teeth, with their souls full of dreadful grief and amazement, with their bodies, and every member of them, full of racking torture, without any possibility of getting ease, without any possibility of moving God to pity by their cries, without any possibility of hiding themselves from him, without any possibility of diverting their thoughts from their pain, without any possibility of obtaining any manner of mitigation or help, or change for the better, and, under the influence of these racking torments, wishing that they might be turned into nothing, but without any hope of it, or that they might be turned into a toad or a serpent, but without any hope of it; and, as if this intolerable misery were not sufficient to satiate the vengeance of Almighty God, it is added, that in the future state the capacity of the wicked will probably be enlarged, and their understandings will be quicker and stronger, and that God can give them as great a sense and as strong an impression of eternity as he pleases, to increase their grief and torment! Let, then, the mind conceive, if it can conceive, what the amount of such misery, endured through all the ages of eternity, must be, and determine whether its infliction for the sins of seventy years be consistent with justice.

But it is further argued, that though it were not just to inflict an endless punishment for the sins committed in this life only, yet there would be no injustice in suffering the sinner to go on in sin, and to punish him continually, and without end, as he sins—that, if God may, without injustice, permit a creature to fall into sin to-day, and punish him for it, he may do the same to-morrow, and through any period of his existence—that, if it be just to leave a sinner to endless sin, it is just to inflict on him endless punishment for that endless sin—that, therefore, the endless sin and punishment of a creature is no more inconsistent with the divine justice, than the existence of sin and punishment in any instance, and for ever so short a duration—that, since it is conceded that the sinner may be justly punished until he repents, it follows that if he never repents he may be justly punished without end—that, therefore, in order to establish the position, that endless punishment is not reconcilable with divine justice, it must be shown that it is not consistent with divine justice to leave a sinner to proceed without end in his own chosen course of sin, and to punish him daily for his daily sins, and that, until this shall have been done, it will be in vain to plead that those who die in impenitence will all finally be saved, because endless punishment is not reconcilable with the justice of God.*

This argument is opposed to the plain and uniform doctrine of scripture, and to the universally received opinion among Christians, that the punishment of the future state will be inflicted for the sins of the present life. It is never said in scripture, that, in the place of punishment to which he will be doomed, the sinner will go on in sin, and be punished continually and without end as he sins—that he will be left to endless sin, and that endless punishment will be inflicted upon him for that endless sin. No language of this kind—no language conveying any thing like such ideas, is ever used; but the punishment is always said to be inflicted for the deeds done in the body; and the sorrow of the sinner is uniformly represented as excited by recollections of the sins of the present life, and this is the uniform opinion of Christians of all denominations. It is not allowable, therefore, for the advocate of endless misery, when, in the argument on the justice of God, he is pressed with the difficulty of explaining how, in consistency with that justice, the sins of seventy years can be visited with an eternity of misery, to have recourse to the supposition, that that misery may be inflicted, not for the sins of the present life only, but also for the sins of the future state, which may be committed in endless succession.

But, though this supposition cannot be admitted, even granting that it were just, the great difficulty with which the doctrine of endless misery is encumbered is not in the least removed. In order to prove that endless punishment is not reconcilable with divine justice, it must be shown, it is said, that it is not consistent with divine justice to leave a sinner to proceed without end in his own chosen course of sin, and to punish him daily for his daily sins. It is replied, that to leave the sinner in this manner, and then to punish him for so sinning, is not only not consistent with justice, but is so utterly opposed to it, that it is not in the power of the human imagination to conceive of a more flagrant and enormous violation of it. For God made man what he is; God ordained the circumstances in which man is placed; God knew that such circumstances, operating on such a creature, would inevitably involve him in sin and misery through all eternity. With this clear foresight, to alter nothing in the nature of the creature, to alter nothing in the arrangement of the circumstances, but to persist in giving him that very nature, and in placing him in those very circumstances, the inevitable result of which he knew would secure the production of this endless sin and misery—is malignant in the highest possible degree; and, were the Deity malignity itself, he could not act worse. To speak of justice in connexion with such a transaction is an insult to the human understanding. It would be inconceivably less absurd to speak of the excellence and beauty of the worst act of the worst tyrant that ever disgraced humanity. The overwhelming difficulty of attributing to the benignant Father of mankind this horrible injustice must always attach to the doctrine of endless misery; nor can any ingenuity or sophistry exonerate it. Justice absolutely requires that the Creator should render every creature which his hand has formed happy, upon the whole, the whole

* Salvation of all men strictly examined, &c., chap. vi. p. 149.

of his existence considered. Any possible condition of any creature, which is consistent with a balance of enjoyment, is reconcilable with justice. No condition of any creature, with whatever purpose appointed, that is not consistent with that balance, is reconcilable with justice; for the reason so often assigned in this work, that non-existence is no evil, but that existence with a preponderance of misery is, and that a being who acts voluntarily, and who gives existence, making that existence miserable, proves, as clearly as it is possible to prove, that he is evil.

On the other hand, to allow sin and misery to prevail for a season, and to make them the means of increasing the ultimate amount of happiness, is not only consistent with justice, but may be an evidence; and, the more it is considered, the more clearly it appears to be an evidence of the highest wisdom and the most perfect goodness.

Nor is it proper to represent the doctrine of Universal Restoration as teaching that sinners will ultimately be restored to happiness on the ground of justice. This is a favourite mode of representing the subject with Dr. Edwards.

And, because the pardon of sin, and the communication of future happiness, are so constantly and uniformly said, in scripture, to be owing to the free and unmerited goodness of God, any system which seems to make these blessings the right of the sinner will of course appear inconsistent both with reason and scripture. There is reason to believe that on certain minds this argument has produced great impression; but nothing can be more false than the statement on which the argument is founded, and nothing more fallacious than the argument iself. It is true, that in a popular sense the wicked, after they have endured the punishment which their sins deserve, may be said to be exempted from farther suffering, on the ground of justice; but still, if they are permitted to enjoy future happiness, it is obvious, that all that happiness is the gift of pure goodness. But the full answer to this singular argument is, that in strictness, exemption from farther punishment, even after the full penalty of sin has been endured, cannot be claimed as a right, because punishment itself is goodness—goodness guided in its manifestations by wisdom—goodness adapting itself in the best possible manner to the moral state of the recipient—goodness, the greatest and the best which the Deity himself, under such circumstances, can bestow. In truth, punishment is the means—the best and the only means, by which the sinner can be rendered happy; and therefore his obligations to his Moral Governor for punishment is just the same as it is for happiness.

For goodness and justice are the same. Justice requires no more punishment for sin than goodness. Goodness requires the same as justice, but the manner in which benevolence manifests itself under the form of goodness and of justice is different, and therefore requires a different appellation. A person who forgives an offence upon repentance and reformation is good. This is one modification of goodness, which, by way of eminence, is often called goodness itself, or, more strictly, mercy. The person who visits an offence which is neither repented of nor amended, with a proper degree of pain, is also good. This is another modification of goodness, to which the term is applied. Mercy and justice, therefore, do not differ from each other in their nature, since they equally arise from benevolence, and they differ in aspect only according to the moral condition of the being with regard to whom they are exemplified.

This account of divine justice explains in a most satisfactory manner the principle on which the Deity rewards and punishes mankind. Did men never violate the laws of rectitude, he would make them invariably and completely happy. But there is no person who is free from fault. The moral state of every individual is in some respect, or at some period, such as it ought not to be. Every bad disposition, and every improper habit, must be rectified before happiness can be enjoyed. It is necessary, therefore, that the Moral Governor of the world should vary his conduct according to the character of the persons whom he has to treat—that he should visit the good with favour, and manifest his disapprobation of the wicked; for, if he were to make happiness compatible with sin, it could not be corrected.

The effect of pain is to make us dislike and avoid that which causes it. It is for this reason, that pain is annexed to sin. Sin is an evil which it is necessary to remove; pain is employed as the instrument of its destruction; and that principle by which the Deity has established this constitution of things, by which he so regulates events, as invariably to secure the ultimate reward of goodness, and the punishment of wickedness, is distinguished by the term justice.

Again, then, we see that goodness and justice are not opposite and opposing attributes—that they have the same nature, the same origin, the same end—that they assume a different aspect, indeed, according to the character of the individual towards whom they are exercised, but that they equally arise from benevolence, and are equally exerted to promote happiness. Justice is so far from being incompatible with goodness, that it is the highest goodness, directed by the most perfect wisdom.

Were it necessary to add any thing more to show that the divine justice is not inconsistent with the attribute of goodness, but a part of it, the consideration of the design of its inflictions would afford farther evidence of this truth. Every violation of the law of God involves the transgressor, sooner or later, in suffering; and of the constitution of things, by which pain is inseparably connected with deviation from rectitude, the Supreme Being is the author. Why did he appoint it? Why did he so dispose the whole tendency of his moral government, as to ensure this consequence? Why does he, who is a Being

of unerring wisdom and infinite benevolence, suffer any offence which never is unrepented of to escape punishment? Since his very nature is love, and since he created all his intelligent offspring in order to make them happy, it can be no gratification to him to involve them in suffering. Their groans can be no music to his ear. If he afflict them, it must be not for his own gratification, but for their benefit.

Neither is it the part of justice to indulge passion, nor to gratify revenge, nor in any mysterious way to satisfy the claims of law, but to check the progress of vice and misery, by correcting the evil dispositions from which they proceed. By inflicting punishment on the sinner, it accomplishes this in two ways: first, by the effect of example, operating as a warning on those who may be disposed to commit similar offences, and, secondly, by making the transgressor himself feel the evil consequences of his conduct, and thereby inducing him to avoid it in future. Every person allows that the first is one object of the inflictions of justice; but surely the second is at least equally important, since it applies to the root of the evil at once, and aims to correct actual, while the other can only prevent possible evil. If the punishment which justice imposes can prevent the commission of crimes in future, and correct the disposition from which the past have proceeded, it is both more perfect and more benevolent, than if it effect the one without the other. That it is in itself possible to accomplish both, cannot be denied; and, since God is able to do all that is possible, and disposed to do all that is best, he must effect both.

In the 18th chapter of Ezekiel, there is a beautiful passage, which illustrates in a striking manner this view of the divine justice. The house of Israel had complained that the conduct of God was not just. He condescends to reason with them on the subject, and to prove that his dispensations are perfectly equitable. 'If,' says he, 'the wicked turn from all the sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die: his transgressions that he hath committed shall not be mentioned to him; in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All the righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he has trespassed, and in his sins that he has sinned, he shall die. Yet ye say that the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal, and are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done he shall die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.'

This is as though he had said, When the wicked man turns from his sins, I cease to punish him. I do not remember against him his former transgressions. His moral state is changed; my conduct towards him is therefore no longer the same. While he was wedded to transgression, it was necessary that he should be punished. Now that he is repentant and obedient, it has ceased to be so, and I may visit him with the smiles of favour. I have no pleasure in his misery or death; neither can benefit or gratify me. All my dispensations are designed, and have a tendency to make him in love with life, with goodness, and with happiness.

If, on the other hand, the righteous man forsake the path of rectitude, and do according to the abominations of the wicked, I suffer him no longer to be at peace; I permit not his former righteousness to secure him from punishment. It is necessary that experience should teach him the error of his choice. It is the only way to rectify his will and reclaim his heart. Is not this conduct consistent with justice? Does not justice render it indispensable? To both I act as their moral state requires, and thus I will always act. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. Do you demand the reason of my conduct? It is because I have no pleasure in the misery of the wicked, and because it is the object of my dispensations to make the wicked righteous, and the righteous happy.

Such is the principle according to which the Moral Governor of the world himself declares that he invariably regulates his conduct. Nothing surely can afford a more solid ground of confidence and trust. In the state in which his wisdom has seen fit to place us on the earth, there is much which, to our short-sighted view, may seem inconsistent with perfect rectitude. When we see the triumph of the vicious and the fall of the virtuous—when we behold the prevalence of natural and moral evil, and contemplate the wickedness and misery which desolate the earth, who is there that is not sometimes ready to raise a murmur against the Sovereign Ruler of events, or who does not lift, trembling, his eye to his throne, half doubting whether there be indeed an all-perfect Ruler there? When the storm of adversity falls with violence on our head—when our hearts ache with suffering, or when we weep for the woes of those who are dear to us as ourselves—when our brightest hopes are shrouded in disappointment—when our comforts are snatched from us, and the merciless spoiler bears to the tomb our best loved friends—the soul, desponding, asks if that can be wisdom which occasions such terrible emotion, or that goodness which

gives but to take away. It is a suspicion which agony extorts from human infirmity. But in the Christian's breast it is only the suspicion of a moment. No where can he direct his attention without perceiving traces of the goodness of God, nor even in the hour of deepest sorrow can he look inward on himself, without discovering numberless proofs of mercy. His faith revives. The iron grasp of despair loosens its hold of his heart. Again he is himself, and, while his principles resume their wonted influence in his soul, the language of reviving hope and trust falls from his lips—'"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Can he, whose benevolence called me into being, made me what I am, and gave me what I possess, forget to be gracious, or treat me with injustice? It is impossible! "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne!"'

But it is not to the sorrows of life alone, that this view of the divine justice applies its sustaining energy. It supports our hopes in the prospect of that awful day, which it is so difficult to contemplate with composure. There are moments, when the most pious and holy tremble at the thought of appearing before the tribunal of the Judge of the whole earth; but the conviction, that his decisions must tend to promote the ultimate welfare of all intelligent beings, subdues every gloomy and mistrustful fear.

It is not merely for his own felicity, that the good man is concerned. He looks beyond himself. The destiny of others affects his own. If the great majority of his fellow-creatures are to be banished to irremediable and endless woe, he feels that he cannot be happy. 'Merciful Father, (his own felicity excites the exclamation, and he cannot repress it; Merciful Father, he cries,) can any attribute of thy nature require this? Canst thou have formed the great majority of thy creatures on purpose to torment them? O no; every perfection of thy nature, the operation of which is felt by man, must be exerted for his good.'

Viewing, then, the attribute of justice, which has been supposed to require the endless misery of the greater part of the human race, as that very principle which is designed to prevent this terrible consequence, he feels himself capable of relying with implicit confidence on the decisions of the Judge, both with regard to himself and to all mankind. He is satisfied that he will treat even the most criminal with perfect equity—that he will place them in circumstances the best adapted to their unhappy condition—that his discipline will ultimately accomplish its end, and extirpate sin and misery from the creation.

By this attribute, then, must be determined the future destiny of all reasonable beings. How deeply ought this solemn truth to be engraven on every mind! How weak, how foolish is the indulgence of any criminal propensity! The scrutiny of Omniscience is on us. The power of Omnipotence surrounds us. The decisions of unerring justice await us. Who, then, can sin with the hope of impunity? Let the wicked man hear and tremble, for remorse and woe await him; and let him that conceiveth iniquity in his heart consider with himself, that justice and judgment are the habitation of the throne of the Great Being with whom he has to do.

SECTION III.

Of the Argument in favour of Endless Misery, founded on the Divine Sovereignty.

If the justice of God afford no argument in favour of the doctrine of endless misery, still less is it supported by the divine sovereignty. If by the sovereignty of God be meant his exemption from control, this may be a reason for his doing what is right, but cannot be a reason for his doing what is wrong. If he have benevolence to design the ultimate happiness of all, wisdom to discern the means of securing his purpose, and if he be absolutely sovereign—that is, if there be no superior power to control his will, this is so far from affording an argument against the final prevalence of purity and enjoyment, that it forms a solid foundation on which the hope of it may be established.

If from the sovereignty of God it be inferred, that he can do whatever he pleases, this conclusion is certainly just; but at the same time it must be remembered, that there are some things which he cannot will. To suppose, for example, that he could create millions of beings, with a determination to doom them to intolerable and endless agony, contradicts every idea of his character which natural and revealed religion teach, and cannot possibly be proved by the admission, that he possesses unlimited power; for, though he be sovereign, and can do what he will, he is also good, and cannot will what is malevolent.

It has been objected to the doctrine of Universal Restoration, as has already been observed, that it places the future happiness of mankind on the footing of right and claim. Nothing can be less true. The advocates of this opinion are so far from believing that endless happiness can be demanded as a right, that they contend that no creature has a claim to existence itself, much less to this or to that degree of enjoyment. They maintain that life is so entirely a free gift, that every intelligent being, however low his rank in the scale of creation, or however little his happiness exceeds his misery, ought, if his pleasure do preponderate, to receive the boon with gratitude; but they contend, that, if the balance of enjoyment be against him, he has nothing for which to be thankful, and that a benevolent Being, who causes him to live forever, must make his immortality a blessing.

Such, then, are the arguments which are commonly urged in support of the doctrine of Endless Misery, whether derived from the language of scripture, or from considerations

which are independent of it. If to affirm that no sober mind can consider them with candor, without being satisfied of their insufficiency and fallacy, be rather the language of strong individual conviction, than of prudence or of truth, it may at least be said, that the preceding observations deserve the serious attention of every person who wishes to contemplate the Deity with reverence and love, or to vindicate the claims of the Christian system to the respect and reception of reflective men.

The cheering and benevolent tendency of a belief in the ultimate happiness of all intelligent beings ought at least to entitle it to attention. He who believes that the whole system of things is under the wisest and the best direction has a source of consolation which must be entirely unknown to him whose system leads him to suspect that the wisdom and benevolence of its Author are limited and partial. Embracing the faith of the first, when true to my principles, I can contemplate the present with complacency, and anticipate the future with delight. I can look upon adversity with resignation—upon prosperity with a calm and chastened joy. I can smile even in those moments when neither philosophy nor religion can check the starting tear. I see, it is true, that man is born to trouble, that his days are few and evil, that impurity stains him, that passion blinds him, that evil of every kind assails him, and that a future state will increase the misery of many individuals for a very protracted period; but I see, too, a principle at work, which must finally destroy it. I see the hand of the Deity arranging every event with exquisite skill and unbounded benignity. I see the prospect brighten as the wheels of time revolve, developing gradually the stupendous scheme, and manifesting at every movement new indications of wisdom and new demonstrations of love. I see at the helm of affairs an intelligence which cannot err, a watchfulness which cannot tire, a benignity which cannot be unkind, and a power which cannot be frustrated. I see at the head of his large family a Father, whose equal love is extended to every individual, who is labouring to promote the happiness of each alike, according to the measure of capacity he has given, and who will not labour in vain. Though clouds and darkness are roundabout him, I am satisfied that righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. I therefore bow with resignation, where I cannot exult with joy, and glow with hope, even when nearest to despair.

But to those who believe that our heavenly Father is partial and capricious in his kindness—that he is the cruel and inexorable tyrant of the great majority of his creatures—that, by an irreversible decree, he doomed them millions of ages before their existence to unutterable torments, and that a few only escape this horrid fate, with affectionate and solemn earnestness I would say, How can you be happy? How can you be happy, even for yourself? How great are the chances, that you are not in the number of the elect! How many thousands are passed by! How few are chosen! How much more probable is it, that you are among the thousands than among the few! Why do you believe that you are the favourite of heaven? What mark is engraven on your forehead—what sensations are peculiar to your heart—what is there in your dispositions or your conduct, by which you have ascertained the important fact? You think you are one of the elect. It may be so. But it may *not* be so. When the chances are so much against you, you cannot be certain of any thing. It is, then, uncertain, whether you are destined to the enjoyment of unutterable and everlasting pleasure, or to the endurance of endless and inconceivable torments. You flatter yourself that the happy portion will be yours. But men easily flatter themselves. What if you should be buoying yourself with a delusive expectation? When such misery is at stake, when such misery impends, and when both are shrouded in such awful uncertainty, how can you enjoy a moment's peace?

But, supposing that you are perfectly satisfied with regard to your own condition, are your anxieties confined to your own welfare, and do you care only for yourself? Are you a father? Are you a mother? Do you love your children, and do you really think of the doctrines you profess to believe? If so, how can you possibly be happy? In imagination I often accompany you into the bosom of your family. I see your eye rest with anxious fondness on your smiling babes. I see the tear start to it. I do not wonder at it. I should be less surprised did your tears unceasingly flow, and were your very hearts to break. That child, of whom you are so fond, whose innocence affects, and whose prattle delights you, what will be its eternal destiny? What uncertainty is there! What horror *may be* there! If, when you are in Abraham's bosom, you should look beyond the gulph which divides you, and behold it lifting up its eyes in torments, and imploring you in vain for a cup of cold water to quench its parched tongue—if you should know that this state of dreadful misery will be without end, and that its sufferings will answer no purpose, would heaven afford you the least enjoyment? Could you contemplate with complacency the author of its misery? Could you surround his throne with songs of praise, exclaiming, in grateful triumph, 'Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!'*

* Yes; there are persons in whom system has so completely subdued the feelings of humanity, that they have brought themselves to view this horrid picture with a steady gaze, to contemplate it with complacency—nay, even to affirm that it is beautiful and glorious. 'The lamb of God shall roar as a lion against them: he shall excommunicate and cast them out of his presence for ever by a sentence from the throne, saying, "Depart from me, ye cursed." He shall adjudge them to everlasting fire, and the society of devils for evermore. And this sentence, we suppose, shall be pro-

It is impossible. Can doctrines which, if they are seriously thought of, must poison the sweetest sources of human felicity, convert heaven itself into a place of torment, and force every feeling mind to contemplate the Deity with horror, be founded in truth, or form a part of the revelation of the God of truth? It cannot be. Every serious and pious mind must rejoice to find that those expressions which occasionally occur in scripture, and which may at first sight seem to favour these frightful opinions, admit of a rational and consistent interpretation, without supposing their truth; while it abounds with many expressions which can have no meaning, and entire series of reasoning which can have no object unless they are false.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE DOCTRINE OF LIMITED PUNISHMENT, TERMINATED BY DESTRUCTION.

MANY Christians of the highest reputation for wisdom and piety, in all ages of the church, have maintained that the wicked will neither be punished with endless misery, nor permitted to be happy at any period of their future being, but that they will be raised from the dead, afflicted with severe and lasting suffering, and then undergo death a second time, from which they will never be restored to conscious existence. This hypothesis, as it supposes the infliction of a degree of pain which is exactly proportioned in every case to the degree of guilt, and which is followed by the total and endless extinction of intelligence and life, is called the doctrine of Limited Punishment, terminated by destruction.

Many passages of scripture are conceived not only strongly to favour, but expressly to assert this opinion. It is true, that it is countenanced by the *sound* of several expressions which occur in the New Testament; but a careful examination of these terms will perhaps show that their genuine meaning is widely different from that which a less thorough investigation might seem to indicate, and that there is no foundation in scripture for this hypothesis.

1st, The advocates of this opinion, like the defenders of the doctrine of Endless Misery, endeavour to establish it on the term *aionios*, which they contend signifies endless duration; and some go so far as to maintain that it is invariably used in this sense, and that it never denotes a limited period. But, in opposition to those who plead for unending torment, they argue that punishment, not misery, is the substantive to which the adjective is applied—that there may be everlasting punishment without everlasting misery, and that the former, not the latter, is invariably threatened in the sacred writings. They maintain, however, that the word which is translated everlasting does signify duration without end.

It is not necessary to repeat here the observations which have been made upon this term. The evidence which has been adduced of its frequent acceptation in a limited sense appears to be irresistible: and though it must be admitted that it does sometimes denote endless duration, yet it has been clearly shown, that this is the case only when the nature of the subject to which it is applied necessarily implies unending existence, and that then it derives the meaning of endless from the subject.

The word being in itself equivocal, and capable both of a limited and of an unlimited signification, the only question which can be agitated is whether, when applied to future punishment, it does or does not denote duration without end. If the affirmative be maintained, it must be shown that there is something in this subject which necessarily imparts to it the sense of endless. Every argument founded upon it, unless this be premised, must be futile, and the advocate for the doctrine of destruction, in venturing to employ it, without first establishing this point, rests his hypothesis upon a term which makes as much against it as for it. But if, instead of being able to perform this task, his opponent can show that the reverse is true, and prove (as has been proved, pp. 154–160,) that the nature of punishment will not admit of this acceptation of the term, the controversy as far as this word is concerned, must be considered as decided, in the opinion of every one who understands the principles of fair and legitimate reasoning.

2d, The advocates of the doctrine of destruction contend that these passages which affirm that the wicked shall *perish* or be *destroyed*, and that they shall suffer *death* or *destruction*, decidedly prove that they will be

nounced with an audible voice, by the man Christ. And all the saints shall say, "*Hallelujah, true and righteous are his judgments.*" None were so compassionate as the saints, when on earth, during the time of God's patience. But, now that time is at an end, their compassion on the ungodly is swallowed up in joy, in the Mediator's glory, and his executing of just judgment, by which his enemies are made his footstool. Though sometimes the righteous man did weep in secret places for their pride, and because they would not hear, yet then he "*shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance, he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*" Psalm, lviii. 10.—No pity shall then be shown to them from their nearest relations. The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the Judge, in the condemnation of her ungodly husband. The godly husband shall say Amen to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom. The godly parents shall say Hallelujah, at the passing of the sentence against their ungodly child, and the godly child shall from his heart approve the damnation of his wicked parents, the father who begat him, and the mother who bore him.'—*Boston's Fourfold State*, state iv. head iv. sect. 9.

After this, can we wonder that system should have so perverted the understanding, as to lead it to approve of the infliction of pain, imprisonment, and death, for an adherence to what was conscientiously believed to be the truth, and so corrupted the heart, as to make it triumph in the subdual of its best feelings, which rose against the dreadful injustice and cruelty, as the noblest effort of heroic piety? After this, will any one venture to maintain, that mere speculative opinions, as many persons term them, are of little importance?

punished with the utter extinction of being. This argument is founded on the presumption, that these expressions denote the endless loss of conscious existence. Few persons, perhaps, will rise from an investigation of this point without a conviction, that there is no foundation whatever for this assumption.

Apollumi, the word commonly rendered to perish or destroy, occurs about ninety times in the New Testament. It is used in several different senses, as, to lose, to lose life, or to lose any thing—to kill or destroy temporally, and this is its most frequent signification; but it often means, also, *to render miserable*, and is used to denote *the infliction of pain or punishment*. Schleusner renders it *miserum reddo, pœnis afficio, molestiam ac indignationem creo alicui*. Romans, ii. 12—xiv. 15. 1 Corinthians, xv. 18.

Apoleia, generally translated death or destruction, occurs about twenty times in the New Testament. It sometimes signifies death, or temporal destruction—at others, injury, hurt, or calamity of any kind. Schleusner renders it unhappiness, any calamity or misery, and observes that it is especially used to denote *the divine punishment of offences, both in this and in a future life*. His words are, *infelicitas, omnis calamitas, misera*, et especiatim, de *pœnis divinis peccatorum et in hac et in futura vita* usurpatur. Matthew, vii. 13. Romans, ix. 12. Philippians, i. 28.

3d, The word *olethros*, commonly rendered destruction, signifies, also, *pain, misery, punishment*. Schleusner renders it *pœna dolor, vexatio cruciatus*. 1 Corinthians, v. 5, 'Deliver such a one to Satan for the *destruction* of the flesh;' *eis olethron tes sarkos*, ut corpus crucietur et doloribus afficiatur. 'Some bodily pain was inflicted, in order to produce repentance and reformation.'—*Simpson*.—The application of *aionios* to this word, in 2 Thessalonians, i. 9, ('who shall be punished with everlasting destruction,') cannot prove that this expression denotes the endless extinction of consciousness and life, because it has been shown that *olethros*, when affixed to the punishment of the guilty, means pain and suffering, and that *aionios* signifies, not proper eternity, but lasting duration.

4th, On the word *thanatos*, death, and the phrase, *deuteros thanatos*, the second death, the advocates of the doctrine of destruction lay the greatest stress. They contend that the strict and invariable meaning of death is the total extinction of consciousness and life—that the doctrine of the resurrection affords us the only satisfactory evidence we enjoy, that this extinction of being will not be endless, and that, since the wicked are threatened with a second death, from which there is no promise of deliverance, we must conclude that their punishment will consist in absolute and irrecoverable destruction.

A little attention to the subject will probably show that the fundamental principle upon which this argument is founded is fallacious. *Thanatos* does not denote the endless extinction of conscious existence. It occurs in the New Testament in several different senses, but never *once* in this, when used concerning intelligent beings. When it relates to the guilty, it denotes, like the other terms which have been considered, *pain, punishment, suffering*. Schleusner observes that it signifies, 1st, Properly natural death, or the separation of the soul from the body, not occasioned by external violence. 2d, Violent death, or the punishment of death. 3d, Per metonymiam, quodvis gravius malum et periculum mortis. 4th, Pestis, morbus pestiferus. 5th, *Any kind of misery and unhappiness, but chiefly the punishment of wickedness, and of offences in this, as well as in a future life: omnis miseria et infelicitas, maxime quæ est vitiositatis et peccatorum pœna* in hac pariter ac in futura vita. 1 John, iii. 14. Romans, vii. 24. John, v. 24, Romans, i. 32.

It must be evident, then, that these words, applied to future punishment, do not denote literal and absolute destruction, or the extinction of conscious existence, but the pain and suffering which will be inflicted upon the guilty, in consequence of their offences. By attaching this meaning to these terms, we render every passage in which they occur consistent with the general tenor of the language of the New Testament, with the benevolent spirit of the gospel, and with the perfections of the Divine Being; but the argument attempted to be deduced from them, in favour of the doctrine of destruction, is founded merely on their sound, without regarding their real and scriptural meaning.

But, even were the fundamental principle upon which it is attempted to establish this hypothesis—namely, that death signifies the eternal extinction of consciousness and life—admitted, (though it has been proved to be false,) instead of supporting the doctrine of limited punishment, terminated by destruction, it would be fatal to it; for, if death denote, together with the disorganization of the corporeal frame, the utter extinction of the intellectual faculty, the wicked cannot be punished in a future state with great and protracted suffering, as this hypothesis teaches, because the moment which terminates their mortal existence must, according to this meaning of the term, put an eternal period to their being.

Should it be urged, that the scriptures affirm that the wicked shall awake from the sleep of death, and suffer the punishment due to their sins, it is obvious that this very argument proves, in the most decisive manner, that the meaning attempted to be affixed to the terms we are considering is not just, and establishes the important conclusion, that death is not the *endless* deprivation of life, nor destruction the *everlasting* extinction of the intellectual principle.

If it be contended, that we are assured that the wicked will undergo death again after their resurrection, and that we have no authority for supposing that they will be restored a second time to life, then the ground of argument is changed; it is made to depend entire-

ly upon those expressions which either affirm or imply that the wicked will be punished with the second death; the controversy is thus brought into a very narrow compass.

With respect to the phrase, *dueteros thanatos*, the second death, it is obvious, that, were death really the *endless* extinction of organized and intelligent existence, the expression, *second* death, would be absurd; for there could be no second death, were the first absolute and eternal.

If it be just to give a literal interpretation to this phrase, it seems to warrant the conclusion, that the wicked will die a second time; yet it is not *affirmed* that they will never rise again. Of the first resurrection we are certain, and we have no assurance that there will not be a second. There is no passage of scripture hostile to the conclusion that there will. Should it be inferred, that a second resurrection will *not* take place, because there is no express promise to authorize the expectation, it may with equal justice be concluded that there *will*, because it is not positively affirmed that there will not. Of these opposite inferences, the latter is at least as well founded as the former; nay, it is much more so, because the first is incompatible with some passages of scripture, but the second is contradicted by none, and is directly supported by several, particularly by those which speak of a first resurrection; for a first resurrection implies a second.

It is affirmed, 1 Corinthians, xv. 26, that the last enemy which shall be destroyed is death—that death is swallowed up in victory—that Jesus Christ has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel, 2 Timothy, i. 10. But if the second death be absolutely endless, or reduce the subjects of it to a state of total and eternal unconsciousness, death is not abolished; its duration is commensurate with eternity; it is not vanquished—it is the victor; it is not destroyed—it triumphs.

To the doctrine of destruction, as well as to that of Endless Misery, the great truth, that there will be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust, is decidedly hostile. Who can believe that the benevolent Father of the human race will call the greater part of his creatures from the sleep of death, and re-organize the curious and beautiful structure in which intelligence and consciousness reside, on purpose to inflict upon them everlasting misery, or very protracted suffering, which will terminate in destruction? What a work does this doctrine assign to the beneficent Creator! How inconsistent with every perfection of his nature! How different this his second from his first creation!

From every thing which we see and feel, it is evident that he intended to communicate happiness by bestowing the gift of life. Is it then possible to imagine that he will raise his creatures from the dead with no other view than to counteract his own design—that he will exert his omnipotence on purpose to frustrate the counsels of his benevolence?

This hypothesis involves the absurdity which has been often pointed out in the preceding pages. It supposes that the Deity restores millions of creatures to life for no other purpose than that of rendering them miserable, which is an act of cruelty of which we can form no adequate conception.

A resurrection to a state of pure, unmixed suffering, (which is the common notion of a state of punishment,) which lasts for a very protracted period, and terminates in destruction, must render the existence of these unhappy persons, upon the whole, a curse. If the Creator saw that any combination of circumstances would be attended with this consequence, he would either have prevented the occurrence of such a train of events, or have withheld the fiat which was about to call the sufferers into life. It has been proved, that every benevolent being would certainly do the one or the other. Either, therefore, there must be, even in the state of punishment, a greater prevalence of happiness than misery, which is contrary to the general idea of that state, or, if this be not the case, since it must render the existence of millions of creatures infinitely worse, upon the whole, than non-existence, it is irreconcilable with the divine benignity.

If, however, any advocate of the doctrine of destruction should affirm that he does not adopt this opinion of the state of punishment, but believes that, at the winding up of the great drama of life, every intelligent being will have reason to bless his Creator for his existence, it is cheerfully admitted, that this argument does not apply against his hypothesis; but surely, while his heart glows with pleasure at the generous conclusion he adopts, he cannot but wish that his satisfaction could be perfected by the sight of pure, happy, and ever-improving intelligences, in the room of that awful and eternal blank which must press upon his view, and close the scene!*

* It affords me great satisfaction to perceive that this argument in favour of the doctrine of Universal Restoration, founded on the resurrection of the wicked, which I think extremely important, and even decisive of the controversy, impressed with equal force the mind of my much respected friend, the late Dr. Estlin, of Bristol. I cannot reflect without pleasure on the conversations I enjoyed with him on this subject, at an early period of my life, and to which I owe, probably, much of that interest and zeal with which I have since pursued the inquiry. Intelligent, amiable, benevolent—admiring and loving the worthy and the wise, pitying, with Charity's own tenderness, the vicious, cheerful and diffusing cheerfulness, he lived—he died—THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER. Part of the passage in his Discourses on Universal Restitution, which has led me to the mention of his name, (and who that knew him can refer to his name without paying it a tribute of respect?) I must allow myself the pleasure of quoting.

'It is proper to mention *two* doctrines, which, if they had been sufficiently adverted to, one would suppose the idea (of the final destruction of the wicked) could never have entered the human mind.' . . . . . 'The first is, that the wicked, without doubt, constitutes *by far the greater part* of the human race. This truth, which, although it is reconcilable to *infinite* benevolence, yet, to a

Such are the arguments, in favour of the doctrine of Limited Punishment, terminated by destruction, and such are the difficulties with which the hypothesis is encumbered. Every objection which is commonly urged, by intelligent persons, against the opinion, that it is the great design of the divine government to bring all mankind to a state of perfect purity and happiness, whether derived from the doctrine of Endless Misery, or from that of total and eternal destruction, has now been fully considered. With regard to the doctrine of Endless Misery, it has been shown that the terms everlasting, eternal, for ever, for ever and ever, &c., on which it is chiefly founded, do not denote duration without end, but only a lasting period—that, even if it could be proved that these expressions, when applied to the subject of future punishment, must necessarily be taken in the sense of endless, it would by no means warrant the conclusion, that the wicked will be kept alive in misery through the ages of eternity; because it is everlasting punishment, not everlasting torment, with which the wicked are threatened—that the application of the same term to the duration of the punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the righteous, by no means proves that both are of equal continuance; because this word denotes different degrees of duration, when applied to different subjects—because the nature of these two subjects is not only not the same, but directly opposite, and because many considerations prove that one of these states will be truly everlasting, but that the other cannot be so—that the argument derived from the metaphor of fire, and particularly from the expression, unquenchable fire, is totally fallacious, because this language is used respecting fires which have been extinguished for ages, and respecting places which have since flourished and which are still in existence—that the sin against the Holy Ghost, which has been deemed so decisive a proof of this doctrine, directly confutes it, since it affords the most satisfactory evidence, that expressions of this kind do not and cannot denote duration without end, and since the punishment annexed to this crime may be inflicted to the very letter without its being endless—that those minor arguments, which are deduced from some expressions and parables of scripture, are insufficient to establish the doctrine, while some of them afford powerful arguments against it, and that the same is true of the reasonings by which many persons have endeavoured to support it.

With regard to the doctrine of Limited Punishment, terminated by destruction, it has been shown that it is founded solely on terms to which an unscriptural meaning is affixed—that, while it professes to be established on the plain and positive declarations of scripture, it is countenanced chiefly by a phrase which occurs only in the most highly figurative book of the New Testament, and amidst expressions entirely metaphorical—that this very phrase affords it no other support than what can be derived from an inference which is so extremely equivocal, that the opposite conclusion may be deduced with

heart which is susceptible of the finest *human* affections, is, after all, a most painful consideration, *cannot* be evaded. The voice of Infallibility hath spoken it; the elevated standard of Christian morality, compared with the general moral state of mankind, confirms it; every analogy of nature points out to it. "Enter ye in at the *strait* gate; for *wide* is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; because *strait* is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it."

'The next doctrine, which must not be forgotten, (I confess I found myself inclined to give it up, when I saw clearly that the doctrine of Annihilation could not be maintained in consistency with it,) *is the resurrection of the wicked.* If the scriptures had *positively asserted* that the wicked would *not* rise, and that their *death* would be the final extinction of their being, the mind must have *acquiesced* in what—reasoning from the infinite benevolence of God, the best foundation of reasoning—it would still have acknowledged a difficulty. If the scriptures had said nothing on the subject, their resurrection and restoration to virtue and happiness might, I think, have been inferred from the same sure and certain principles. They do not, however, leave any room for doubt on the subject. It is *expressly* said, "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of life, they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation." Every account which is given in scripture of the day of judgment confirms this.

'The doctrine of Annihilation, then, supposes that by far the greater part of mankind were created by a benevolent and holy Being, whose prescience foresaw how they would act, to be vicious and die, to be raised from the dead, re-organized or recreated, to be *miserable*, and then to undergo a public execution, by which they would be for ever blotted out of this creation. Some of the wisest and best men that the world ever produced have adopted this scheme of the origin, progress, and end of the divine dispensations. I know we are apt to *overlook* the fate of this *immense multitude;* and a most baneful effect upon the human mind, upon all the institutions of society, and particularly upon penal jurisprudence, has this overlooking of what *others*, even the majority, suffer. My brethren, if the fact be so, fix your minds upon it. You have often regarded with admiration that curious effect of the divine power, the human body—the delicate structure of the eye and the ear, the nerves and brain, the veins and arteries, and the various organs of sensation, respiration, and motion; you have contemplated with devout wonder the faculties of the human mind; you have acknowledged with grateful satisfaction, that God is love—that every organ, that every power, both of body and mind, is an inlet to enjoyment, and that man was formed in the image of God, that he might be the object of his favour for ever. Contemplate the scene which is now to take place. What a process is going on through nature! Myriads of those beings are to be raised from the dead, that is, re-organized, reformed, or re-created, (a work to which Omnipotence alone is equal, for the laws of nature are nothing but the mode of operation of the God of nature,) to be miserable in a greater or less degree, according to their degrees of guilt, and at length to be finally destroyed by fire! The mind cannot dwell on this idea!' *Discourses on Universal Restitution, delivered to the Society of Protestant Dissenters in Lewin's Mead, Bristol.* By John Prior Estlin, LL. D., pp. 82—87.

equal plausibility, and that, while there is not a single passage in which the doctrine is expressed in clear and precise terms, there are many with which it is utterly incompatible.

All the objections which are commonly urged against the cheering and benevolent doctrine, that the whole human race will be ultimately restored to purity and happiness, having been thus fully considered, the mind may now be prepared to enter on an examination of the scriptural evidence which appears to favour it.

PART FOURTH.

OF THE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE FINAL RESTORATION OF ALL MANKIND TO PURITY AND HAPPINESS.

It is admitted, that the term Universal Restoration no where occurs in the Old or New Testament. It has been adopted in this work merely for the sake of brevity and precision. The doctrine of the scriptures is, that God is the Ruler of the world—that every event is under his direction, and promotes in its appointed measure the purposes of his wise and benevolent administration—that the natural and moral evil which prevail are the instruments which his wisdom has chosen, no less than the most obvious blessings of existence, to promote the highest advantage of his intelligent creatures—that, by his almighty and all-perfect superintendence of events, he will secure this result—that he has placed mankind in a state of discipline, in order to form and to try their characters—that those who improve their present advantages, will be rewarded after death with endless felicity—that those who neglect and abuse them, and incapacitate themselves for pure enjoyment, will be placed under a painful and lasting discipline, which will correct their evil dispositions and vicious habits, and form in their minds a genuine love of excellence—that, in order to accomplish these benevolent purposes, he has raised up Jesus Christ, whom he has specially and miraculously qualified to execute the most important of them, having with this view revealed to him the glorious gospel, and commissioned him to declare it to the world—that, in regard of the firmness and fidelity with which he executed this momentous trust, notwithstanding the danger and suffering to which it exposed him, God has highly exalted him, and made him the medium through which he communicates the greatest blessings to mankind—that, as Jesus revealed the gospel, so he will fulfil its promises and execute its threatenings—that, as he was the Instructor of mankind, so he will be their Judge—that to him is committed the direction of the state of discipline to which the wicked will be consigned—that, as the execution of the purposes which are comprehended in this vast and benevolent plan supposes the government of innumerable intelligent beings, and the superintendence of many great and important events, it is termed a kingdom, of which he is said to be the Head—that he will conduct the government of this kingdom with perfect wisdom, until it shall have accomplished all the purposes for which it is appointed—until it shall have extirpated sin, destroyed the consequence of it—death—restored universal purity, and produced universal happiness—that then, being no longer necessary, he will resign his office, restore to him from whom he received it the power with which he was invested, in order that the great Sovereign of earth and heaven, the Fountain of all being and happiness, may himself 'be all in all.'

Such is the glorious consummation of the divine dispensations which the scriptures teach us to expect! Such are the sublime and cheering truths, the evidence of which is now to be detailed!

The principle on which the following investigation of scripture is conducted, and on which it is concluded that the passages which will be cited express or imply these truths, is that which is adopted in the most exact inquiries to which the human understanding is directed. In every philosophical inquiry, it is admitted that that hypothesis ought to be adopted, which accounts for all the phenomena with the greatest clearness, and which is attended with the fewest difficulties. Whatever theory best explains acknowledged facts is universally considered most entitled to regard; and, if it solve the several phenomena easily and simply, while every other hypothesis is attended with contradictions and absurdities, no doubt is entertained of its truth. Now the doctrine, that all mankind will be ultimately restored to purity and happiness, is this perfect theory, with regard to the divine dispensations, and the scriptural terms by which their nature is expressed. It accords with *every* expression that is used in scripture concerning the state of mankind in the world to come, and is confirmed by *all* our best sentiments of the attributes, the providence, and the government, of the Supreme Being. But the notions of Endless Misery, and of the total and eternal extinction of life, neither accord with *all* the expressions of

Such are the arguments, in favour of the doctrine of Limited Punishment, terminated by destruction, and such are the difficulties with which the hypothesis is encumbered. Every objection which is commonly urged, by intelligent persons, against the opinion, that it is the great design of the divine government to bring all mankind to a state of perfect purity and happiness, whether derived from the doctrine of Endless Misery, or from that of total and eternal destruction, has now been fully considered. With regard to the doctrine of Endless Misery, it has been shown that the terms everlasting, eternal, for ever, for ever and ever, &c., on which it is chiefly founded, do not denote duration without end, but only a lasting period—that, even if it could be proved that these expressions, when applied to the subject of future punishment, must necessarily be taken in the sense of endless, it would by no means warrant the conclusion, that the wicked will be kept alive in misery through the ages of eternity; because it is everlasting punishment, not everlasting torment, with which the wicked are threatened—that the application of the same term to the duration of the punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the righteous, by no means proves that both are of equal continuance; because this word denotes different degrees of duration, when applied to different subjects—because the nature of these two subjects is not only not the same, but directly opposite, and because many considerations prove that one of these states will be truly everlasting, but that the other cannot be so—that the argument derived from the metaphor of fire, and particularly from the expression, unquenchable fire, is totally fallacious, because this language is used respecting fires which have been extinguished for ages, and respecting places which have since flourished and which are still in existence—that the sin against the Holy Ghost, which has been deemed so decisive a proof of this doctrine, directly confutes it, since it affords the most satisfactory evidence, that expressions of this kind do not and cannot denote duration without end, and since the punishment annexed to this crime may be inflicted to the very letter without its being endless—that those minor arguments, which are deduced from some expressions and parables of scripture, are insufficient to establish the doctrine, while some of them afford powerful arguments against it, and that the same is true of the reasonings by which many persons have endeavoured to support it.

With regard to the doctrine of Limited Punishment, terminated by destruction, it has been shown that it is founded solely on terms to which an unscriptural meaning is affixed—that, while it professes to be established on the plain and positive declarations of scripture, it is countenanced chiefly by a phrase which occurs only in the most highly figurative book of the New Testament, and amidst expressions entirely metaphorical—that this very phrase affords it no other support than what can be derived from an inference which is so extremely equivocal, that the opposite conclusion may be deduced with

heart which is susceptible of the finest human affections, is, after all, a most painful consideration, *cannot* be evaded. The voice of Infallibility hath spoken it; the elevated standard of Christian morality, compared with the general moral state of mankind, confirms it; every analogy of nature points out to it. "Enter ye in at the *strait* gate; for *wide* is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; because *strait* is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it."

'The next doctrine, which must not be forgotten, (I confess I found myself inclined to give it up, when I saw clearly that the doctrine of Annihilation could not be maintained in consistency with it,) *is the resurrection of the wicked.* If the scriptures had *positively asserted* that the wicked would *not* rise, and that their *death* would be the final extinction of their being, the mind must have *acquiesced* in what—reasoning from the infinite benevolence of God, the best foundation of reasoning—it would still have acknowledged a difficulty. If the scriptures had said nothing on the subject, their resurrection and restoration to virtue and happiness might, I think, have been inferred from the same sure and certain principles. They do not, however, leave any room for doubt on the subject. It is *expressly* said, "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of life, they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation." Every account which is given in scripture of the day of judgment confirms this.

'The doctrine of Annihilation, then, supposes that by far the greater part of mankind were created by a benevolent and holy Being, whose prescience foresaw how they would act, to be vicious and die, to be raised from the dead, re-organized or recreated, to be *miserable*, and then to undergo a public execution, by which they would be for ever blotted out of this creation. Some of the wisest and best men that the world ever produced have adopted this scheme of the origin, progress, and end of the divine dispensations. I know we are apt to *overlook* the fate of this *immense multitude;* and a most baneful effect upon the human mind, upon all the institutions of society, and particularly upon penal jurisprudence, has this overlooking of what *others*, even the majority, suffer. My brethren, if the fact be so, fix your minds upon it. You have often regarded with admiration that curious effect of the divine power, the human body—the delicate structure of the eye and the ear, the nerves and brain, the veins and arteries, and the various organs of sensation, respiration, and motion; you have contemplated with devout wonder the faculties of the human mind; you have acknowledged with grateful satisfaction, that God is love—that every organ, that every power, both of body and mind, is an inlet to enjoyment, and that man was formed in the image of God, that he might be the object of his favour for ever. Contemplate the scene which is now to take place. What a process is going on through nature! Myriads of those beings are to be raised from the dead, that is, re-organized, reformed, or re-created, (a work to which Omnipotence alone is equal, for the laws of nature are nothing but the mode of operation of the God of nature,) to be miserable in a greater or less degree, according to their degrees of guilt, and at length to be finally destroyed by fire! The mind cannot dwell on this idea!' *Discourses on Universal Restitution, delivered to the Society of Protestant Dissenters in Lewin's Mead, Bristol.* By John Prior Estlin, LL. D., pp. 82—87.

equal plausibility, and that, while there is not a single passage in which the doctrine is expressed in clear and precise terms, there are many with which it is utterly incompatible.

All the objections which are commonly urged against the cheering and benevolent doctrine, that the whole human race will be ultimately restored to purity and happiness, having been thus fully considered, the mind may now be prepared to enter on an examination of the scriptural evidence which appears to favour it.

PART FOURTH.

OF THE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE FINAL RESTORATION OF ALL MANKIND TO PURITY AND HAPPINESS.

It is admitted, that the term Universal Restoration no where occurs in the Old or New Testament. It has been adopted in this work merely for the sake of brevity and precision. The doctrine of the scriptures is, that God is the Ruler of the world—that every event is under his direction, and promotes in its appointed measure the purposes of his wise and benevolent administration—that the natural and moral evil which prevail are the instruments which his wisdom has chosen, no less than the most obvious blessings of existence, to promote the highest advantage of his intelligent creatures—that, by his almighty and all-perfect superintendence of events, he will secure this result—that he has placed mankind in a state of discipline, in order to form and to try their characters—that those who improve their present advantages, will be rewarded after death with endless felicity—that those who neglect and abuse them, and incapacitate themselves for pure enjoyment, will be placed under a painful and lasting discipline, which will correct their evil dispositions and vicious habits, and form in their minds a genuine love of excellence—that, in order to accomplish these benevolent purposes, he has raised up Jesus Christ, whom he has specially and miraculously qualified to execute the most important of them, having with this view revealed to him the glorious gospel, and commissioned him to declare it to the world—that, in regard of the firmness and fidelity with which he executed this momentous trust, notwithstanding the danger and suffering to which it exposed him, God has highly exalted him, and made him the medium through which he communicates the greatest blessings to mankind—that, as Jesus revealed the gospel, so he will fulfil its promises and execute its threatenings—that, as he was the Instructor of mankind, so he will be their Judge—that to him is committed the direction of the state of discipline to which the wicked will be consigned—that, as the execution of the purposes which are comprehended in this vast and benevolent plan supposes the government of innumerable intelligent beings, and the superintendence of many great and important events, it is termed a kingdom, of which he is said to be the Head—that he will conduct the government of this kingdom with perfect wisdom, until it shall have accomplished all the purposes for which it is appointed—until it shall have extirpated sin, destroyed the consequence of it—death—restored universal purity, and produced universal happiness—that then, being no longer necessary, he will resign his office, restore to him from whom he received it the power with which he was invested, in order that the great Sovereign of earth and heaven, the Fountain of all being and happiness, may himself 'be all in all.'

Such is the glorious consummation of the divine dispensations which the scriptures teach us to expect! Such are the sublime and cheering truths, the evidence of which is now to be detailed!

The principle on which the following investigation of scripture is conducted, and on which it is concluded that the passages which will be cited express or imply these truths, is that which is adopted in the most exact inquiries to which the human understanding is directed. In every philosophical inquiry, it is admitted that that hypothesis ought to be adopted, which accounts for all the phenomena with the greatest clearness, and which is attended with the fewest difficulties. Whatever theory best explains acknowledged facts is universally considered most entitled to regard; and, if it solve the several phenomena easily and simply, while every other hypothesis is attended with contradictions and absurdities, no doubt is entertained of its truth. Now the doctrine, that all mankind will be ultimately restored to purity and happiness, is this perfect theory, with regard to the divine dispensations, and the scriptural terms by which their nature is expressed. It accords with *every* expression that is used in scripture concerning the state of mankind in the world to come, and is confirmed by *all* our best sentiments of the attributes, the providence, and the government, of the Supreme Being. But the notions of Endless Misery, and of the total and eternal extinction of life, neither accord with *all* the expressions of

scripture relative to a future state, nor with our purest and most exalted sentiments of the attributes and proceedings of the Universal Parent. According to the strictest rules of philosophizing, therefore, the first must be regarded as the true hypothesis.

The passages of scripture which favour the opinion, that the whole human race will finally be restored to purity and happiness, may be divided into those which imply its truth, and into those which appear precisely and positively to affirm it.

The passages which imply it are those which contain certain declarations which must be false, if this opinion be denied, but which are full of truth and beauty if it be admitted. The passages which appear positively to affirm it are those, to the language of which it seems impossible to affix any other meaning.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WHICH IMPLY THAT ALL MANKIND WILL BE ULTIMATELY RESTORED TO PURITY AND HAPPINESS.

UNDER the passages which imply the ultimate restoration of the whole human race to virtue and happiness may be arranged—

1st, All those which speak of God as the kind and benevolent Father of mankind.

Psalm cii. 13, 14, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust.'—Malachi, ii. 10, 'Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?'—Ephesians, iv. 6, 'There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.' We are likewise instructed by our Lord, Matthew, vi. 9, to address the Supreme Being in prayer as our Father.

The scriptures delight to exhibit the Deity to his human offspring in the character of a Father. It is the most natural, as well as the most endearing manner in which we can conceive of him. He is our Father in a much more strict and intimate sense than any creature is the parent of another. He constructed the curious and delicate fabric in which our consciousness and intelligence reside. He formed those wonderful organs which are continually at work within us, and which minister equally to life and to enjoyment. He endowed us with those noble faculties by which we are capable of pursuits and pleasures of the same nature with those that constitute his own happiness, the operation of which affords us continual gratification, but of which we know nothing, except that they are wonderful and glorious. It is he who has so exquisitely adapted our nature to the objects which surround us, that we can scarcely move without experiencing pleasure, and that so many things which interest and delight us continually crowd upon our senses. It is he who has made us what we are, and his constant energy is necessary to continue us in existence. In the strictest sense it is true, that 'in him we live, move, and have our being.'

And, as he is so much more intimately and truly our Father than our human parents, so he must be as much more perfectly so in respect to the disposition with which he regards, and the manner in which he treats us. All that is tender and endearing in the most affectionate and excellent of human parents can afford us but a faint image of what he is to his whole family of mankind.

Does any good father punish with revenge? Does any tender mother harbour implacable resentment against her child? Would she, if she were able, punish it with endless misery, or inflict upon it intolerable anguish for a very protracted period, and then blot it out of existence?

If a human parent who acted in such a manner would be regarded with universal execration, who can believe an hypothesis which attributes such conduct to the benevolent Father of men? We may be mistaken in the meaning of a word, or the accuracy of a criticism, but we cannot err in rejecting opinions which give such an exhibition of the character of God. But in this manner both the doctrines of Endless Misery, and of absolute, irrevocable destruction, represent our heavenly Father as treating the greater number of his children, while that of Universal Restoration teaches that his conduct towards every individual of his large family is infinitely more excellent than that of the most wise and benevolent parent. The latter opinion therefore, is true; the others are false.

2d, The ultimate restoration of the whole human family to purity and happiness is favoured by all those passages which represent God as *good*.

Psalm xxxiv. 8, 'O taste and see that the Lord is *good*.' liii. 1, 'The goodness of God *endureth continually*.' cxlv. 'The Lord is good *to all*, and his tender mercies are over *all his works*.'—1 John iv. 8, 'GOD IS LOVE."

If there be any foundation for the doctrine of Endless Misery, or of absolute, irrevocable destruction, these passages are not true. The doctrine of Endless Misery teaches that God created the great majority of mankind to make them miserable—that he called them into being with no other view than to glorify his justice by their eternal condemnation, and that from all eternity he foreordained them to this horrid fate. To say of such a Being, that he is good, that his very nature is love, that his tender mercies are over all his works, and that his goodness endureth continually, is to destroy all distinction between tenderness and cruelty, and to identify malevolence with benignity.

If it be said that he treats the elect with benevolence, and that these expressions relate only to these favoured individuals, it is replied, that this is an assumption which is unsupported by the shadow of proof; for these passages do not affirm that he is good to the elect, but that he is good to *all*, and that his tender mercies are over *all his works*.

If he elected a few individuals to happiness, and decreed the great majority to endless misery, how can there be any truth in the declaration, that he is good to all? And if the greater number are to be doomed to torment, day and night, without intermission, forever—if, in the anguish of their souls, they incessantly cry to him for mercy, beseeching him to lighten or shorten their suffering, and if he behold their misery without pity, and turn a deaf ear to their supplications, how can his *tender mercies* be over ALL his works, or his goodness endure continually?

Nor is the doctrine of destruction consistent with these passages; for according to this opinion the wicked will be raised from the dead, afflicted with terrible and unremitted anguish, for a very protracted period, and then blotted out of existence for ever; so that, upon the whole, they must be incalculably more miserable than happy. Even if the contrary should be maintained, and it should be said that they will enjoy more than they suffer, still, according even to this concession, these passages can be true only in the lowest sense.

But, if the Deity design and pursue the ultimate felicity of all his intelligent creation, what a light and glory do they shed on his character, and how perfectly do they accord with the noblest ideas we can form of the object of his dispensations!

3d, The final restoration of all mankind to purity and happiness is favoured by those passages which speak of God as *merciful*.

Exodus, xxxiv. 6, 7, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.'—2 Chronicles, xxx. 9, 'The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you if you return unto him.'—Psalm ciii. 8, 'The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.'

These repeated declarations of the compassion and clemency of God cannot be true, if through the ages of eternity he refuses to be reconciled to the great majority of his creatures. It is vain to endeavour to prove that he is merciful, on the ground that he is willing to forgive the penitent sinner in the present state; for—not to mention that, if there be any truth in the common doctrine of the divine decrees and of election, the pretension is an idle mockery—were his clemency restricted to this life, he would have infinitely less claim to the character of merciful, than that man would possess who should inflict the most intolerable suffering on another, for the space of eighty years, without any disposition to relent, except for a single hour. There is, indeed, an utter disproportion between the two cases, because this life, compared to eternity, is inconceivably less than an hour compared to eighty years.

They who contend that the mercy of God is restricted to the present life ought to remember that they have no scriptural authority for this opinion. Such a notion is never inculcated in the Old or New Testament. There is not a single passage from which it can be fairly deduced. Those which might seem to favour it have been fully considered. The declarations of scripture are not—The Lord is merciful and gracious, but his clemency is limited to the present state. He is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, but he becomes implacable and inexorable the moment this life terminates; its language is, 'The Lord is merciful and gracious; slow to anger and plenteous in mercy: he hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him: for he knoweth our frame: he remembereth that we are dust.'

If he place his offending offspring under a discipline which corrects their evil dispositions, and forms in their hearts a genuine love of excellence, this beautiful and affecting description of the Deity is just; but if he doom them to intolerable, unremitted, and unending anguish, or if, after having made them suffer the utmost penalty of their crimes, he blot them out of existence for ever, every syllable of it is false?

4th, The ultimate happiness of every individual of the human race is favoured by all those passages which positively deny that God will be *angry for ever*.

Psalm xxx. 5, 'His anger endureth but for a moment.' ciii. 9, 'He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever.' lxxvii. 7–12, 'Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever; doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious; hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? And I said, this is my infirmity: I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord. I will meditate on thy work, and talk of thy doings.'—Isaiah, lvii. 16, 'I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.'

How different is this description of the disposition and conduct of the Deity from that which is exhibited by the doctrines of Endless Misery, and of total and eternal destruction! They affirm that his anger will flame with relentless fury through all eternity; the scriptures declare that his anger endureth but for a moment. They affirm that the punishment which he will inflict will never terminate; the scriptures declare that he will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever. They affirm that he will hereafter have no mercy on the wicked, but cast them from him for ever; the scriptures make the most solemn and touching appeal to our own understanding and heart, whether this can be true:—'*Will* the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious?

Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? And I said, This is my infirmity!'

These words ought to be engraven on the heart. To say that they relate solely to offenders in the present life is to take for granted the point in dispute, and to affirm what cannot be proved. Is not this language as applicable to future as it is to present punishment—to the chastisement of the wicked, as to the correction of him who has fallen from rectitude? With regard to the former, does it not equally put to us the affecting questions, 'Will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?' No; it is impossible. Whoever shall attempt to persuade me that there can come a period when he will eternally shut up in anger his tender mercies, I will repeat to him this passage: I will say, 'It is your infirmity!'

5th, The final restoration of all mankind to purity and happiness is favoured by those passages which represent God as declaring that he takes no pleasure in the punishment of the wicked.

Ezekiel, xviii. 23, 'Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live?'—Chronicles, xxxiii. 11, 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his ways and live.'—2 Peter, iii. 9, 'The Lord is long-suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

The doctrine of Endless Misery teaches that, from all eternity God, for the praise of his glorious justice, decreed the great majority of his creatures to irremediable and eternal death; yet the scriptures represent him as contradicting this in the most express terms, and in the most solemn manner: *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his ways and live.*

Revelation, iv. 11, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and by thy will, or for thy pleasure, they are and were created.'

What cause can there be for an ascription of praise to their Creator, on the part of the greater number of his creatures, if, millions of ages before their existence, he doomed them to intolerable and endless misery? Could any one who believed such a doctrine speak in this rapturous manner of the work of creation? But what a delightful meaning is there in this language, and what abundant cause is there for praise, if all intelligent beings are ultimately to be restored to purity and happiness! Then, indeed, may it be said of the Author of this glorious scheme, 'Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honor and power.'

6th, The final restoration of all mankind to purity and happiness is favoured by those passages which represent the Deity as chastising his children with the disposition of a parent, and by those which affirm or imply that future punishment will be corrective.

Deuteronomy, viii. 5, 'Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.'—Job, v. 17, 'Happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.'—Psalm xciv. 12, 'Blessed, O Lord, is the man whom thou chastenest.'—Hebrews, xii. 5–11, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily, for a few days, chasteneth us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.'

These passages declare, in the strongest and plainest language, that God chastens his creatures in the same manner as a wise and benevolent parent corrects his child. Those who maintain that this is true only of the virtuous, or that he treats the wicked in this manner in the present life alone, must conceive that he is the Father only of a part of mankind, or that a period will arrive when his treatment of his children will be unworthy of a good parent.

And why should either of these suppositions be entertained? We are too apt to exclude the vicious from our benevolent regard, and to consider and treat them as utterly worthless. This pernicious feeling is even transferred to the great Parent of the human race. But the vicious can never become utterly worthless, because they always retain their moral capacity and their sentient nature. So long as they are capable of knowledge and virtue, they are fit objects of moral discipline; so long as they retain the power of feeling, and can suffer pain or enjoy happiness, they are proper objects of benevolence. A false system of philosophy, a selfish and exclusive system of theology, may make us forgetful of these unalterable and imperishable claims upon our best affections, which all of human kind possesses; but he cannot overlook them, who is the Creator of all, and who cares alike for every individual of his large family. It is the faculty of reason that renders a creature a proper object of moral discipline; it is the capacity of suffering and of enjoying that renders him a proper object of benevolence; and these even vice itself cannot destroy. However, therefore, the condition of the wicked may be changed in the future state, it cannot be changed to this extent—to the extent, that is, of rendering them no longer the objects of moral discipline, which must be the case, if their

punishment be not corrective, or to the extent of excluding them from the care of benevolence, since they must retain their sentient nature. To suppose, therefore, that a period can ever come, when the punishment of the erring creatures of humanity will not be corrective, and when the benevolent Father of those creatures will cease to regard them with a Father's tenderness, is both without reason and contrary to reason.

Matthew, xxv. 46, 'These shall go away into lasting chastisement, but the righteous into life eternal.'

The word translated punishment, in the received version, is *kolasis*, a term which is universally allowed to signify chastisement or corrective punishment. It is used in this sense by the heathen philosophers: 'Dicemus ergo in pœnis respiciant utilitatem ejus qui peccarit, aut ejus cujus intererat non peccatum esse, aut indistincte quorumlibet. Ad horum trium finum primum pertinet pœna quæ philosophosis modo, *nouthesia*, modo *kolasis*, modo *parainesis*, dicitur. Paulo jurisconsulto, pœna quæ constituitur in emendationem, *sophroniseos eneka*, Platone, Plutarcho *iatreia psuches*, animi medicatrix, quæ hoc agit ut eum qui peccavit reddat meliorem medendi modo qui est per contraria.'*—*Grotius de Jure Belli et Pacis*, lib. ii. cap. xx. sect. 6.

Simpson observes on this word, 'Our Lord, in the awful and impressive description of the proceedings of the last judgment of mankind, has selected the term *kolasis*, in no other place in the New Testament applied to the future state, in order to explain with the greater precision the final recompense of the sinner. There seems, in Matthew, xxv. 46, to be an evident allusion to the Septuagint translation of Daniel, xii. 2, which was commonly used in Judea, when our Lord appeared. The expression *zoen aionion*, is literally adopted in order to express the recompense of the righteous. But, instead of *aischunen aionion*, the expression, *kolasin aionion*, appears to have been purposely substituted, as comprehending that variety of painful chastisement, both in kind, and degree, and duration, which the highest ideas of the perfections of the Supreme Parent and Ruler naturally lead us to suppose he will inflict upon his children and subjects, according to the nature and magnitude of their offences. Even in human governments, a wise and good magistrate would employ temporary corrective chastisement for the reformation of criminals, that they might be restored to usefulness and happiness in society, in preference to capital punishments, if he could devise proper ones, and secure success in the use of them. Now, with respect to the Supreme Lord and Parent of all, there is unerring wisdom to contrive infallible means, boundless goodness to incline him to employ them, and Almighty power to accomplish every end that infinite perfection proposes.'

7th, The final purity and happiness of all mankind is favoured by those passages which represent the benefits resulting from the obedience and death of Christ as co-extensive with, and even exceeding, the evils produced by the disobedience and fall of Adam.

1 Corinthians, xv. 22, 'As through Adam *all* die, so likewise through Christ shall *all* be made alive.' In this passage, the evil produced by sin is compared with the benefit received by Christ, and it supposes that the life imparted by him is a blessing; but, if the wicked are to be raised from the slumber of the tomb, only to be visited with severe and protracted punishment, and then destroyed, or to be kept in endless misery, the restoration of their existence, instead of a benefit, is an unspeakable disadvantage.

Romans, v. 15, 'That as the offence, so is the free gift; for if, through the offence of one, *oi polloi*, the many (that is, *the great body of mankind—Newcome*,) have died, much more the favour of God, and the gift which is through the favour of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded, *eis tous pollous*, unto the many. If, by the offence of the one, death reigned by this one, much more those who receive the abounding of favour, and of the gift of justification, shall reign in life by the one man Jesus Christ. So then, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation, so likewise, by the righteousness of one, the free gift hath come upon *all men* to justification of life. For as, by the disobedience of one man, the many were made sinners, (or treated as such, by undergoing death,) so likewise, by the obedience of one, the many will be made righteous; that, where sin abounded, the favour of God has much more abounded; that, as sin reigned unto death, so favour likewise might reign by justification to everlasting life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Nothing can be more evident, than that it is the apostle's intention, in this passage, to represent all mankind, without exception, as deriving greater benefit from the death of Christ, than they suffer injury from the fall of Adam. The universality of the apostle's expressions is very remarkable. The same many, who were made sinners by the disobedience of the one, are made righteous by the obedience of the other. If *all men* are condemned by the offence of the one, *the same all* are justified by the righteousness of the other.

These universal terms, so frequently repeated and so variously diversified, cannot possibly be reconciled to the limitation of the blessings of the gospel to the elect alone, or to a part only of the human race. Unless the wicked are reformed by their punishment, can there be any truth in the declaration, that the favour of God by Christ abounds much more than sin and death? If the great majori

* We observe, then, that punishment regards the benefit either of the offender, or, of the offended, or indeed, of any other persons. The punishment which respects the first of these three purposes is called by philosophers sometimes *nouthesia*, sometimes *kolasis*, and sometimes *parainesis*. According to Paulus, a lawyer, the punishment designed for amendment is by Plato said to be *sophroniseos eneka, for the sake of making wiser*. And it is called by Plutarch, *iatreia psuches, the healer of the mind;* because according to the art of healing, it renders him who has sinned better by means of contraries.

ty of mankind are to continue in sin and misery through all eternity, or at some remote period to be blotted out of existence, it is they that triumph. They are infinitely more extensive than the abounding of favour. According to both of these doctrines, therefore, the reasoning of the apostle in this passage is totally inconclusive.

The passages which have been quoted appear decidedly to favour the doctrine of the ultimate restoration of all mankind to purity and happiness, since in every case a denial of this opinion is a contradiction of the declarations they contain. There are passages, however, which seem still more expressly to confirm the truth of this hypothesis.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WHICH APPEAR EXPRESSLY TO AFFIRM THAT ALL MANKIND WILL BE ULTIMATELY RESTORED TO PURITY AND HAPPINESS.

In the former editions of this work, some passages were arranged under this head, which, on further examination, I am satisfied cannot be justly adduced as express affirmations of the doctrine, that the whole human race will finally be restored to virtue and happiness. I consider the celebrated passage in Ephesians, i. 8–10, as probably, though not certainly, asserting it: 'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself, concerning the dispensation of the fulness of times, that he would gather together to himself in one all things through Christ, which are in the heavens and which are on the earth, even through him.' At first view, this passage seems exceedingly favourable to this opinion, and appears, indeed, expressly to affirm, that it is the great object of the divine dispensations to unite together, in one holy and happy state, all intelligent beings under Jesus Christ. But many learned and enlightened men propose a different interpretation. They suppose that this passage relates to God's predetermination to comprehend Gentiles as well as Jews in the blessings of the gospel dispensation. 'The interpretation of the ancient fathers,' says Whitby, 'seems to give this sense, that God hath, by this dispensation, gathered, under one head, viz., Christ, the head of the church, all things on earth—that is, Jews and Gentiles—and all things in heaven, Christ being the head over principalities and powers. Locke's paraphrase of this and of the four preceding verses, is as follows: 'Having predetermined to take us Gentiles, by Jesus Christ, to be his sons and people, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the end, that the Gentiles too might praise him for his grace and mercy to them and all mankind, magnifying his glory for his abundant goodness to them, by receiving them freely into the kingdom of the Messiah, to be his people again, in a state of peace with him, barely for the sake of him that is his beloved, in whom we have redemption by his blood, viz., the forgiveness of transgressions, according to the greatness of his grace and favour, which he has overflowed in towards us, in bestowing on us so full a knowledge and comprehension of the extent and design of the gospel, and prudence to comply with it, as it becomes you, in that he hath made known to you the good pleasure of his will and purpose, which was a mystery that he hath purposed in himself, until the coming of the due time of that dispensation wherein he hath predetermined to reduce all things again, both in heaven and on earth, under one head in Christ.' By the phrase, 'things in heaven, and things on earth,' he understands the Jewish and Gentile world, observing, 'That St. Paul should use heaven and earth for Jews and Gentiles, will not be thought so very strange, if we consider that Daniel himself expresses the nation of the Jews by the name of heaven. Daniel viii. 10. Nor does he want an example of it in our Saviour himself, who, Luke, xxi. 27, by "powers of heaven," plainly signified the great men of the Jewish nation; nor is the only place, in this epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, which will bear this interpretation of heaven and earth. He who shall carefully read the fifteen first verses of chap. iii., and carefully weigh the expressions, and observe the drift of the apostle in them, will not find that he does manifest violence to St. Paul's sense, if he understands by "the family in heaven and earth," verse 15, the united body of Christians, made up of Jews and Gentiles, living still promiscuously among those two sorts of people who continued in their unbelief. However, this interpretation I am not positive in, but offer it as a matter of inquiry to such who think an impartial search into the true meaning of the sacred scripture the best employment of all the time they have.'

Mr. Belsham says, 'Perhaps the sense of this intricate period may be thus expressed: Which riches of his goodness he has abundantly exhibited to us, having enriched our understanding with a clear knowledge of that mystery which was the object of his gracious and eternal purpose, and which relates to that dispensation which has now at the fulness of time taken place, namely, that he would reunite * under one head, even Jesus Christ, all descriptions of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles.'

Although, if the above interpretation be just, this passage cannot be considered as bearing that positive and decided testimony to the truth, that all mankind will be ultimately restored to purity and happiness, which some learned men have supposed, yet it does

* The primary signification of the word *anakephalio*, which the apostle here uses, is *to sum up an account or to reduce many sums to one.*—*Schleusner.*—And the phrase, 'all things,' signifies all persons, the neuter being put for the masculine, as in John, vi. 39. *Ut nempe omnes creaturæ intelligentes in cœlo et in terra, per Christum in unam societatem adducerentur.*—*Rosenmuller.*

not weaken that testimony so much as might at first be apprehended; for, even admitting that the apostle meant by the phrase, 'things in heaven and things on earth,' Jews and Gentiles, yet it deserves to be borne in mind, that these expressions include all mankind, since, in the apostle's view, Jews and Gentiles would comprehend the whole of the human race, there being no description of persons which would not be classed by him under one or other of these divisions. Mr. Locke's own paraphrase of the 6th verse is, 'To the end that *all mankind* might magnify his glory for his abundant goodness to them.' If the Jews and Gentiles include all mankind, how far does the interpretation suggested by Mr. Locke limit the sense of the passage? May it not still be understood to declare, not only that under the gospel dispensation Jews and Gentiles are admitted to equal privileges, but also that it is the gracious purpose of God to restore all mankind to a state of perfect virtue and happiness, and thus to unite all under one head, namely, Jesus Christ? This passage must be understood to refer to some future change, universal in its extent, and happy in its consequences; for at no period since the advent of the Messiah have these been united together in one under him. All do not, and never have acknowledged his mild and benevolent sway. Sin and misery still dispute and always have disputed the government of the world with him. But are we not by this passage encouraged to believe that, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, every disposition which opposes him shall be destroyed, and that, different as men's character and condition may be at present, they shall all then become his willing subjects, and be rendered holy and happy? And, as Christ will be the means of effecting this glorious work, may not all mankind in this sense, be said to be gathered together in one under him? If there be no reason for restricting this passage to a more limited signification, does not this sense best accord with the diffusively-benevolent spirit of the gospel, with the character of God as the kind Father and wise Governor of mankind, and with many other passages of scripture? However, in the language of that great man and excellent Christian, whose words on a similar occasion have just been cited, and, I trust, with something of the spirit with which he wrote them, I would say, that of this interpretation I would not be positive, but 'offer it as a matter of inquiry to such who think an impartial search into the true meaning of the sacred scripture the best employment of all the time they have.'

The same observations I would apply to the similar passage, Colossians, i. 19, 20, 'It hath pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell, and, having made peace through his blood shed on the cross, that by him he would RECONCILE ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF; that is, all intelligent creatures.'—*Newcome.* —'By him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven.' It is highly probable that the phrase, 'things on earth or things in heaven,' signifies Gentiles and Jews. But, since Gentiles and Jews comprehend all mankind, it seems just to take this passage in its most extensive sense, and to consider it as affirming, that it has pleased the Father to appoint Jesus Christ to be the great instrument of reconciling to himself the whole human race. And, if this be so, how can the intention of the Father be accomplished, if the greater number of human beings remain for ever at enmity with him, and execrate his name through all eternity, or if they are blotted out of existence because a reconciliation could not be effected between them?

That remarkable passage in Romans, v. 12–21, has already been considered in the last chapter; but it must be again brought under review in this. 'As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and thus death hath passed upon all men, in as much as all have sinned: (for until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law; nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a resemblance (a type) of him that was to come: yet the free gift likewise is not so, as was the offence; for if through the offence of one, many have died, much more the favour of God, and the gift which is through the favour of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. Neither is the gift so, as it was by one who sinned; for the judgment was of one offence to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences to justification. For if, by the offence of one, death reigned by one, much more those who receive the abounding of favour and of the gift of justification will reign in life by one, even Jesus Christ.) So then, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so, likewise, by the righteousness of one, the free gift hath come upon all men to justification of life. For as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so, likewise, by the obedience of one many will be made just. Now the law entered in privily, so that offences abounded. But where sin abounded, the favour of God hath much more abounded; that as sin hath reigned through death, so favour likewise might reign by justification to everlasting life by Jesus Christ our Lord.'

In this passage, all men are said to have been made mortal by the offence of Adam, and here the phrase, 'all men,' must necessarily be understood to signify every individual of the human race. Though the style of the apostle in this passage is remakably intricate and perplexed, yet his meaning is clear, and can scarcely be misunderstood. He affirms that sin entered into the world by Adam, and that, in consequence of his offence, death passed upon all men, or all men became mortal. Thus many were made sinful or mortal by one In this sense, Adam was a type of Jesus Christ; for, as all mankind became subject to great privation and suffering, in consequence of the offence of one, namely, Adam, so the

greatest privileges and blessings are bestowed upon all mankind in consequence of the obedience of one, namely, Jesus Christ. But it is only in this single circumstance, that all suffer and all are benefited by one, that there is any analogy between them; for in every other respect there is the greatest possible difference between Adam and Christ. The act entailing such important consequences upon the whole human race was on the part of Adam an act of transgression—on the part of Christ an act of obedience. And there is a still further disparity between them; for the calamities resulting from the act of transgression were the legal punishment of the offence; but the blessings accruing from the act of obedience were not such as could be claimed by law, but were the free, unpurchased, unmerited gift of God. And the consequences of the act of transgression and the act of obedience may be placed in still more striking contrast; for the act of transgression was but one, and yet death, with all the calamities connected with it, passed upon the whole human race, 'while the act of obedience provides justification for many offences. Nor is this all; for the blessings procured for mankind by the obedience of Christ are unspeakably greater than the calamities brought upon them by the offence of Adam.

This is undoubtedly the argument of the apostle. Notwithstanding all the obscurity and perplexity of his language, whoever reads the passage with attention must perceive that these are the ideas which were in his mind. And in the whole compass of Christian truth there is no doctrine more important or more glorious than that which is thus disclosed. It is a direct and positive declaration, that the blessings provided by the obedience of Christ shall, in the number of persons who partake of them, be co-extensive with the calamities produced by the offence of Adam, and in their magnitude and value shall greatly exceed them. This is sufficient; this is decisive. These ideas were in the mind of the apostle. This is the doctrine which he plainly and indisputably teaches, and nothing more is necessary; for, even though it should be proved that he illustrates his doctrine by a fanciful allusion to what was in itself only an allegory—that his reasoning is not in every respect complete, and even that he did not himself fully comprehend all the glorious consequences of the sublime truth he disclosed, that truth would be neither the less important, nor the less certain.

The great fact itself—the fact which it was his object and his office to teach, and in which he could not be mistaken, was, that the blessings produced by the obedience of Christ shall be as extensive as the evils occasioned by the offence of Adam—that all who suffer from the one shall partake of the benefits of the other, while these benefits themselves shall infinitely exceed and overbalance the calamities entailed upon mankind by the first transgression. The conclusion is inevitable, that the whole human race, without exception, shall ultimately be restored to virtue and happiness. By one passage of scripture, then, at least, the doctrine which it is the object of this work to establish is positively and expressly affirmed, and this is decisive.

But this passage is of great importance in another view. It may be justly considered as confirming, in no inconsiderable degree, the interpretation which has been suggested of the passages in Ephesians and Colossians; for in this passage it cannot be doubted, that, while it is the object of the apostle's reasoning to show that all mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, are alike participators of the divine favour, and included in the gospel dispensation, it likewise follows, from his argument, that it is equally the intention of the benevolent Author of this dispensation, to bestow immortality upon the whole human race, and to advance them to a state of pure and perfect virtue and happiness.

I omit 1 Timothy, iv. 10, ii. 3, 4—1 John, ii. 2—Philippians, ii. 9–11—Hebrews, ii. 8—which were formerly adduced as proofs, that all mankind will ultimately be placed in a state of virtue and happiness. All these passages, indeed, seem perfectly to harmonize with this opinion, but some of them I now think too obscure to be alleged in proof of any controverted doctrine; and all of them, it is probable, relate to a different subject than that of the future condition of mankind.

There is, however, another passage, which still appears to me expressly to the point, and decisive of it, namely, 1 Corinthians, xv. 21–29: 'For since by man came death, by man also cometh the resurrection of the dead. For as through Adam all die, so likewise through Christ all will be made alive. But every one in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterwards those that are Christ's at his appearance. Then will be the end, when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power: for he must reign till he have put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy shall be destroyed, even death. For "he hath subjected all things under his feet." But when it is said, "All things are subjected," it is manifest that he is excepted who subjected all things to him. And when all things shall be subjected to him, then the Son himself also will be subjected to him who subjected all things to him, that God may be all among all.'

Although it may be difficult to ascertain the exact meaning of certain parts of this passage, yet it appears to me to contain a clear and positive annunciation of the sublime and glorious truth, that the consummation of the divine dispensations will be the extinction of death, and sin, and misery, and the universal and eternal prevalence of immortality, virtue, and happiness. 'For since by man came death, by man also cometh the resurrection of the dead. For as through Adam all die, so likewise through Christ all will be made alive.'—'It is evident,' as Mr. Belsham observes, 'that the apostle here assumes, as the foundation of his analogy, the account of the fall of man, as recorded in the book of Gene-

sis, and argues upon it as literally true, that, according to this account, all the posterity of Adam, the whole human race without exception, were victims to mortality, in consequence of the fall of their first parents in Paradise—that, according to the same account, as all were sufferers through him, so all shall be raised to life, and restored to that state of dignity and happiness from which Adam unhappily fell—that thus Christ shall amply repair the ruins of the fall, and the second Adam completely efface the dishonour and misery entailed by the first.'

Mr. Belsham, in his excellent commentary on this passage, further remarks, that 'it is very plain, that the resurrection of which the apostle treats in this celebrated chapter is the resurrection, not of a chosen few, of a select number, whether greater or less, but that of the whole human race. The apostle's language is so clear and full, with respect to the final happiness of those who are thus raised, and that their resurrection to life will be ultimately a blessing, that the generality of Christians have supposed that he is here treating of the resurrection of the virtuous only. But this is not the fact. He evidently speaks of the restoration of the whole human race—All who die by Adam shall be raised by Christ—otherwise the apostle's assertion would be untrue. The case, then, would have been this: As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall a select number, a small proportion, be made alive. But this is not the apostle's doctrine. His expressions are equally universal in each clause. ALL die in Adam. The same ALL, without any exception, without any restriction, shall by Christ be restored to life, and ultimately to holiness and everlasting happiness. And, to guard against the abuse of this doctrine, he proceeds to declare, that all will not be admitted at the same time to the participation of final happiness; for, though all men will be restored to life, and raised to happiness, all will not be made happy at once, but each will be advanced as he becomes qualified for his reward, till in the end the enemies of Christ shall all be subdued, and his authority shall be universally acknowledged and obeyed—but every one in his proper class, not all at once. There will be a gradation in the introduction to final blessedness, depending upon the characters of those who are to partake of it; "Christ, the first-fruits." He is already raised to life, and his virtues, his labours, and his sufferings, have received their reward. He is the glorious first-fruits, the specimen and the pledge of the final and universal harvest. "Afterwards, they who are Christ's at his coming." The true disciples and community of Jesus, all the upright and virtuous in every age and country, will next be raised to life and happiness, and this joyful event will next take place at that long expected period, when Jesus shall appear again in his own and in his Father's glory, invested with the high commission to raise the dead and to judge the world, when the dead in Christ shall rise first, and, being acknowledged by him as his friends and followers, shall be transformed into the likeness of his glorious person, and shall enter with him into the joy of their Lord.'

From the remaining part of this passage, although it may not be possible to ascertain with certainty and precision what is meant by the kingdom with which Christ is entrusted, and which he shall ultimately deliver up to the Father, nor in what sense he shall become subject to him who subjected all things to him—yet we may safely deduce the following conclusions: that, after the resurrection of the just, Christ will be invested by the Father with authority and power to accomplish some great purpose with regard to mankind—that that purpose can be nothing but the completion of the wise and benevolent design of the divine government, in the total abolition of the calamities introduced by the fall—that the accomplishment of this gracious purpose alone constitutes the end, the grand consummation of all things, and that, though this consummation will be opposed by numerous and potent enemies, yet that Christ will exert the power with which he is invested, until he has utterly subdued them, when, having completed the end for which authority was delegated to him, he will willingly resign it into the hand of the Gracious Parent, the Universal Sovereign, from whom he received it, who shall then become forever all things to all his creatures.

This appears to be the clear and express doctrine of the passage, and if it be so it is decisive. The ultimate and universal prevalence of immortality, virtue, and happiness, is thus plainly disclosed, and asserted with all the energy and dignity worthy of the exalted theme. It is thus evident, that the power with which Christ is invested is not given him in vain, but will be completely effectual—that his triumph will be perfect—that there is no rule, no authority, no power which is opposed to him, which he will not utterly abolish, no enemy which he will not put under his feet. But the enemies with which he is at war, the enemies which it was the labour of his life, the object of his death, and the end of his present exaltation, to exterminate, are, sin and misery, and death, the consequence of sin. And over these we are assured by this passage that he will completely triumph. The consequence is certain. The conclusion is inevitable. Immortality, holiness, and happiness, must in the end universally prevail. How else is it possible that these declarations can be accomplished? How can Christ put down all the rule, all the authority which is opposed to him, if a malignant and omnipotent spirit (called the devil) succeed in making the great majority of mankind his victims, and through the ages of eternity exercise all uncontrolled dominion over them? How can Christ *subdue all things unto himself*, if this malevolent being and his agents eternally counteract and oppose him? How can God be all in all, if the greater number of his creatures incessantly execrate his name, and vent the most horrid blasphemies against him? How can death, the last enemy with which he conflicts, be destroyed, if it succeed in blotting

out of existence for ever millions of millions of human beings? The only idea it is possible to annex to the destruction of death is the prevalence of life; but, if (to repeat what has already been said) death effect the total and eternal extinction of the conscious existence of the great majority of mankind, it is not vanquished—it is the victor; it is not destroyed—it triumphs.

There appears to be no reason whatever for restricting the application of this passage solely to the righteous, as with a view of avoiding the force of the preceding observations, some have contended, because the context does not require this limitation—because the expressions which the apostle employs are of too universal a signification to admit of it, and because it is difficult to conceive that any thing but the wish to support a system could have suggested the idea, or indicated the necessity of it.

Such is the scriptural evidence in favour of the ultimate and universal prevalence of holiness and happiness. All the passages which have been cited appear necessarily to imply the truth of this opinion; to some of them it seems impossible to affix any other meaning. There is not a single passage in the Old or New Testament which does not perfectly harmonize with this doctrine; but several of the most striking, impressive, and cheering assurances of scripture are totally incompatible with the opinions which oppose it. With the highest and noblest conceptions we can form of the nature and dispensations of the Deity, with the nature of man and the nature of punishment—in a word, with all that natural and revealed religion teach concerning God, concerning his human offspring, and concerning a future state, it perfectly accords. With this body of evidence in its favour, and with no real counter-evidence of any kind to oppose it, it may surely be considered as established.

If any one should fear that its inculcation may lessen the dread of future punishment, and thus operate to the disadvantage of piety and virtue, the apprehension must originate in a misconception of the doctrine, or an ignorance of human nature. To teach men that they will be visited with a just degree of punishment for the sins they commit—that every deviation from rectitude, even the slightest and the most secret, that every improper feeling and thought which is cherished, *must* bring with it a proportionate degree of suffering, must *inevitably* do so, unless the constitution of the mind and the whole frame of nature be changed—that those who indulge in the least degree in vice must necessarily, in all situations and at all seasons, be the worse for it, and that, if they continue in a vicious course to the end of life, both the nature of the case, and the repeated and solemn declarations of scripture assure us that the pain they will be made to suffer in a future world will be most severe and lasting—to suppose that such doctrine will encourage sin, is to imagine that men can be enamoured of misery, and that, to excite them to any particular course of conduct, it is only necessary to convince them that it will terminate in their ruin.

If men cannot be restrained from vice by the apprehension of a reasonable and just degree of punishment; it is vain to hope to deter them by menaces, which they are satisfied are both unreasonable and impossible. To suppose that they will encourage themselves in sin, from a persuasion that the misery which they must inevitably bring upon themselves in consequence of it will terminate in their reformation, is to imagine that they are insane as well as vicious, and to betray the baseness of our own hearts, by showing that we form a worse opinion of mankind than the worst of men deserve.

Indeed, it is hardly conceivable, that the reasonable and just, the solemn and impressive sanctions which the Christian religion gives to the Christian law would be attended with no greater moral benefit than it is to be feared they are, were they always scripturally enforced. It requires, however, but little acquaintance with human nature, to know, that, in order to render the fear of punishment availing in the hour of temptation, it is absolutely necessary to satisfy the mind both of its equity and certainty. The passions of the heart never were, and never can be, counteracted, either by actual injustice, or by unreasonable menaces; and to teach that an eternity of suffering will be the consequence of the slightest offence, is to open the floodgates of sin, to deprive the mind of the most powerful motives to struggle against its improper inclinations, and even to stimulate it to the pursuit of the unhallowed objects of its desire, by forcing it to suspect the weakness, if not to doubt the reality of the checks by which it is attempted to restrain it. Were there, therefore, no other argument against the doctrines of Endless Misery and of Total Destruction, than that afforded by their tendency to lessen the sanctions of morality, by destroying the fear of punishment, this alone would be sufficient to justify a distrust of their truth.

The effects of the unamiable doctrine of Endless Misery, and of its kindred opinions, on the temper and conduct, have been strikingly depicted by an able advocate of the doctrine of destruction. 'According to men's sentiments of God, and of the designs and measures of his government,' observes Mr. Bourn, in his Discourse on the Gospel Doctrine of Future punishment, 'such hath been the influence of religion on their temper and conduct. And, if they have not framed to themselves a God after their own evil hearts, they have framed their own hearts agreeable to that false and evil character which they were taught to ascribe to God. And when they have believed the Deity to love and hate, to elect and reprobate, nations, parties, or individuals, without reason or regard to the ends of good government, they themselves have become more arbitrary, bigoted, fierce, unmerciful, and more addicted to hate and persecute their fellow-creatures, all who are not of their own church, and whom they supposed to be reprobated of God.

'It is hardly credible, that inhumanity and cruelty would ever have been carried to such excess in the Christian world as they actually have been, had they not derived countenance and support from these antichristian and barbarous notions. Tyrants and persecutors, if they have not invented these doctrines, yet have applied them to excuse to their own consciences, and to vindicate to others, the most iniquitous and cruel proceedings; and when they had made the very worst use of their power, in persecuting good men—at least men who deserved no such punishment—they have persuaded themselves and others, that they were acting like the Deity, espous his cause, and maintaining his character and his glory.

'The court of *inquisition*, as established in many countries, and as far as it differs from civil courts of judicature, is declared by the authors and maintainers of it to be the nearest imitation of the divine tribunal, and it is avowedly founded upon and justified by the doctrines of reprobation and of eternal torments. Jews, infidels, and heretics, are judged in that court to be criminals, and are condemned. And how do they vindicate this procedure, but by supposing them to be all reprobated and abhorred of God? And they execute them, not by a quick despatch, but by the most lingering torments. And what do they plead for this cruelty, but that it is an act of faith—that they are doing the work of God, and that he will expose those wretches to the like torments for ever? Thus they conquer nature by faith, as they express it; that is, they extinguish all sense of justice and relentings of mercy in their own nature, and harden themselves in iniquity and barbarity, by the belief of those very doctrines we are exposing, and by them they defend themselves in the face of the world, and give a colour and sanction of religion to the most enormous wickedness.'

The doctrine, on the other hand, which it is the object of the preceding pages to establish, discloses a principle which is more benevolent in its tendency, and which, were it properly felt, and invariably regarded in the affairs of life, would have a happier effect on society than any other opinion which has ever engaged the attention of men. It leads to a distinction which is but beginning to be observed, even by the intelligent and enlightened, and which, when it shall come to be general, will alter astonishingly the moral condition of the world. It leads to an exact discrimination between the criminal and the crime. While it inspires us with abhorrence of the offence, it softens the heart with compassion for the unhappy condition of the offender, induces us to do every thing in our power to change it, to give him better views and better feelings. When we hear of the perpetration of a crime, we are too apt to think only of punishment. What suffering can be too great for such a wretch? is the exclamation which bursts from almost every lip. The sentiment is worthy of the unlovely doctrines which produce and cherish it. A more benevolent system would excite a different feeling. What can be done to reclaim the unhappy offender? What means can be taken to enlighten his mind and meliorate his heart? What discipline is best adapted to his mental and moral disorder? What will lead him back to virtue and to happiness most speedily, and with least pain? Such is the feeling of the mind enlightened by the generous doctrine we have endeavoured to establish. Could it but enter the heart of every legislator—did it but guide the hand that constructs the cell of the poor captive—did it apportion his pallet of straw and his scanty meal—did it determine the completeness and the duration of his exclusion from the light of day and the pure breeze of heaven—did it apply his manacles, (if, disdaining to treat a human being with more indignity than is practised towards the most savage brutes, it did not dash his chains to the earth,) what a different aspect would these miserable mansions soon assume! What different inhabitants would they contain! Prisons would not then be the hotbeds of vice, in which the youthful offender grows into the hardened criminal, and the want of shame succeeds the abolition of principle, but hospitals of the mind, in which its moral disorder is removed by the application of effectual remedies.

The person who habitually contemplates all mankind as children of one common Father, and appointed to one common destiny, cannot be a persecutor or a bigot. He may see much error which he may lament, and much misconduct which he may pity; but a generous affection towards the whole human race will dilate his heart. To the utmost of his ability, he will enlighten the ignorant, correct the erring, sustain the weak, bear with the prejudiced, and reclaim the vicious. Firm to his own principles, he will not trench on the liberty of others. He will not harshly censure, nor suspect an evil motive where integrity and conscience obviously direct the conduct. Mildness will be on his lips, forbearance will mark his actions, and universal charity will connect him with the wise and good of all climes, and of all religions.

He who believes that a Being of almighty power, unerring wisdom, and unbounded love, is seated at the helm of affairs, and is making every event promote, in its appointed measure, the highest happiness of all intelligent creatures, must possess perpetual serenity and peace. The storm of adversity may gather above him and burst upon his head, but he is prepared against it, and it cannot dismay him. He knows that the evils which encompass him are only blessings in disguise. The fair face of nature smiles upon him with a brighter radiance. The boundless expanse of heaven above him, the painted plain beneath him, the glorious sun which diffuses light and life over the ample and beautiful creation, are magnificent gifts of his Father, on which his enlightened eye beholds engraven the promise of his higher destiny. The narrow precincts of the tomb can neither bound nor obstruct his enlarged view. It extends beyond the circle of the earth, and reaches to that celestial world, where progression in excellence is infi-

nite, and happiness is unchanging and immortal. Nothing can disturb his steady confidence. In the most awful moment of his earthly existence, his feeling is sublime as his destiny is glorious. Even while he is partially subdued by death, and dragged to the confines of the tomb—while he is sinking, into it, and it closes over him, he can exclaim in triumph, O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth me the victory, through Jesus Christ, my Lord!'

Such are the effects of an enlightened and scriptural view of the perfections and government of God, and the nature and destiny of man. Indeed, a firm persuasion, that our Creator is possessed of every possible excellence, that he is our constant and best Friend, that we are entirely at his merciful disposal, that he is conducting us, and all our brethren of mankind, by the wisest means, to the highest happiness, and that the natural and moral disorders which afflict us are the instruments by which he will eventually establish the universal and eternal reign of purity and bliss, cannot but tend to expand the heart, to cherish the benevolent affections, to soften the manners, and to unite the whole human race in the tenderest bands of friendship and affection. Were it right to judge of the general effect which the frequent and serious contemplation of these sublime and cheering truths would have on the mind, by the feeling of which he who has made this humble attempt to illustrate and establish them has been conscious while engaged in the pleasing task, with sincerity he might say, that it would be highly favourable to benevolence and to happiness. A more ardent love of the Supreme Being, a purer and warmer attachment to his fellow-creatures, a more anxious desire to promote the attainment of genuine excellence, both in himself and others, has glowed in his heart, while meditating on these delightful subjects. Uniformly has he seemed to himself to rise from the contemplation more deeply affected than before with the emotions of piety and benevolence. May the perusal of these pages produce the same happy effect on the mind of the reader. May it inspire him with a fervent love of God. May it cherish in his bosom an ardent and generous attachment to the whole family of mankind. May it enable him to enjoy with a more reasonable, pure, and social satisfaction, the blessings of existence, and to sustain, in a manner worthy of a man and a Christian, the affliction which may await him. May it continually cheer him with the most glorious hopes, and fit him to realize them. And may the anticipation of the universal and everlasting reign of Purity and Happiness hasten his own attainment of both!

THE END.

UNION:

OR

A TREATISE

OF THE

CONSANGUINITY AND AFFINITY

BETWEEN

CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

BY JAMES RELLY.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is CHRIST." 1 *Cor.* xii. 12.

PHILADELPHIA:
GIHON, FAIRCHILD & Co.
1843.

PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

The first edition of the "Union" appeared in 1759. In the preface, Mr. Relly acknowledges that he "was for a long season, after being satisfied of the redemption which is in Christ, very uneasy at times concerning *the equity* thereof;" and this uneasiness was resolved into a positive difficulty by the hints of a friend. "He asked me," says Mr. Relly, "wherein was the justice and equity of one man's suffering death, yea, even the torments of hell, for another—so contrary to reason, and also to the scripture, which often declares that the righteous shall not suffer for the wicked, but that every man's sin shall be charged upon his own head."

Our author confesses that he "was not prepared for such a question as this, and was therefore involved in a difficulty." The consequent inquiry and labour of thought resulted in a solution, satisfactory to his own mind. To the proof and elucidation of the basis of that solution, the following work is devoted.

It will be perceived that Mr. Relly adopts and establishes the abstract hint of his friend, namely, the injustice of punishing one man for the sins of another; but instead of inquiring whether the scriptures really teach that Christ *was* thus punished, he takes this for granted, and seeks to prove the justice of the procedure by proving such a Union between the Messiah and mankind as would equitably bring upon the former the judgments deserved by the latter.

The position which Mr. Relly *assumes*, namely, that *Christ was punished in our behalf*, is entirely without foundation in truth—as may be shown by a few considerations.

1. There is a marked distinction and difference between *suffering* and *punishment*. Both imply pain endured—but the latter also implies *guilt* and the *consciousness* of guilt, which the former does not. "Christ *suffered* for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." 1 Pet. iii. 18. But to say that he was *punished* for sins, is quite another matter. He was not *guilty*, and therefore cannot be said with propriety, to have endured *punishment*.

2. Nor can this conclusion be evaded on the score of *imputation*—for, to impute guilt or sinfulness to an *innocent*, yea, *righteous* person, is a violation of both truth and equity. Besides: Holy Writ never treats of imputing the actions of one man to another; but every man's actions are spoken of in relation to himself, individually. "Abraham believed God, and it was *imputed to him*, for righteousness." Rom. iv. 22. *Not* to impute sin, signifies not to upbraid or reproach the transgressor for his former iniquities. But it is in every instance a *personal* matter.

3. The sufferings of the primitive disciples were of the same kind as the sufferings of Christ. In the connexion of a passage above quoted, the apostle says, "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for [or in the cause of] well-doing than for evil-doing. For *Christ* also hath once *suffered* for sins," &c. And in this sense, men may "*suffer* for righteousness' sake," and be blessed therein. 1 Peter iii. 14. If *vicarious punishment* be not implied in the one case, neither is it in the other.

Notwithstanding the error which, in our judgment, is thus confuted, Mr. Relly's treatise is a valuable one. The *doctrine* of *Union* is his principal theme: and this he abundantly establishes by "express warrant of holy scripture"—and this, too, without necessarily involving the error referred to. To Adam, as *the image of the earthly* constitution, we are all united; and hence, *in Adam all die*. To Christ, as *the image of the heavenly* constitution, we are all united by the purpose of God; and hence *in Christ, shall all be made alive*. One of the sublime results of Paul's reason in 1 Cor. xv. is stated in ver. 49: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Christ is *the head of every man*, 1 Cor. xi. 3; and *tasted death for every man*. Heb. ii. 9. As *the head* is glorified in the immortal resurrection state, so also shall be *the body of universal humanity*, which is marching onward to its union with God.

Besides the intrinsic merit of this Treatise, its instrumentality in the conversion of John Murray commends it to the regard of every Universalist. Mr. Murray was deputed by the Whitefield convention, to which he belonged, to visit a young lady who was suspected of a leaning to "Rellyism," with a view to withdraw her from the dangerous snare. The conversation, which may be found in Murray's Life, Chap. IV., is one of the most brilliant religious anecdotes on record. It is subjoined. He was staggered and confounded, but not convinced, by the young lady's reasoning; and "from this period," says he, "I carefully avoided every Universalist, and most cordially did I hate them. My ear was open to the public calumniator, to the secret whisperer, and I yielded credence to every scandalous report, however improbable. My informers were *good* people: I had no doubt of their veracity; and I believed it would be difficult to paint Relly and his connexions in colours too black."

Some time afterwards, a Mr. Mason, who had attempted a reply to Relly's Union, submitted the manuscript to Mr. Murray's inspection. It was not satisfactory—and a copy of the Union falling providentially in his way, Mr. Murray was led, step by step, to unwavering trust in God as the Saviour of all. An intimacy with Mr. Relly, of the most tender and endearing character, ensued. He however resisted all importunity to become a public advocate of "the faith once delivered to the saints." But in 1770 he landed in America, and became a messenger of good tidings to all people. His memory is embalmed in the recollection of all our Churches.

A. C. Thomas.

FAITH IN TRUTH.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE ANECDOTE REFERRED TO IN THE PRECEDING PREFACE.

I HAD heard much of Mr. Relly; he was a conscientious and zealous preacher in the city of London. He had, through many revolving years, continued faithful to the ministry committed to him, and he was the theme of every religious sect. He appeared, as he was represented to me, highly erroneous; and my indignation against him, as has already been seen, was very strong. I had frequently been solicited to hear him, merely that I might be an ear witness of what was termed his *blasphemies;* but, I arrogantly said, I would not be *a murderer of time.* Thus I passed on for a number of years, hearing all manner of evil said of Mr. Relly, and *believing all I heard,* while every day augmented the inveterate hatred which I bore the man and his adherents. When a worshipping brother or sister, belonging to the communion, which I considered as honoured by the approbation of Deity was, by this deceiver, drawn from the paths of rectitude, the anguish of my spirit was indescribable: and I was ready to say, the secular arm ought to interpose to prevent the perdition of souls. I recollect one instance in particular, which pierced me to the soul. A young lady of irreproachable life, remarkable for piety, and highly respected by the tabernacle congregation and church, of which I was a devout member, had been ensnared; to my great astonishment, she had been induced to hear, and having heard, she had embraced the pernicious errors of this detestable babbler; she was become a believer, a firm, and unwavering believer of universal redemption! Horrible! most horrible! So high an opinion was entertained of my talents, having myself been a teacher among the Methodists, and such was my standing in Mr. Whitefield's church, that I was deemed adequate to reclaiming this wanderer, and I was strongly urged to the pursuit. The poor deluded young woman was abundantly worthy of our most arduous efforts. *He that converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* Thus I thought, thus I said; and swelled with a high idea of my own importance, I went, accompanied by two or three of my Christian brethren, to see, converse with, and if need were, to admonish this simple, weak, but, as as we heretofere believed, meritorious female. Fully persuaded that I could easily convince her of her errors, I entertained no doubt respecting the result of my undertaking. The young lady received us with much kindness and condescension, while, as I glanced my eye upon her fine countenance, beaming with intelligence, mingling pity and contempt grew in my bosom. After the first ceremonies, we sat for some time silent; at length I drew up a heavy sigh, and uttered a pathetic sentiment, relative to the deplorable condition of those who live and die in unbelief; and I concluded a violent declamation, by pronouncing with great earnestness, *He that believeth not shall be damned.*

'And pray, sir,' said the young lady, with great sweetness, 'Pray, sir, what is the unbeliever damned for not believing?'

What is he damned for not believing? *Why, he is damned for not believing.*

'But, my dear sir,' she asked, 'what was that, which he did not believe, for which he was damned?'

Why, for not believing in Jesus Christ, to be sure.

'Do you mean to say that unbelievers are damned for not believing there was such a person as Jesus Christ.'

No, I do not; a man may believe there was such a person, and yet be damned.

'What then, sir, must he believe, in order to avoid damnation?'

Why, he must believe that Jesus Christ is a complete Saviour.

'Well, suppose he were to believe, that Jesus Christ was the complete Saviour of others, would this belief save him?'

No, he must believe that Jesus Christ is *his* complete Saviour; every individual must believe for *himself that Jesus Christ is his complete Saviour.*

'Why, sir, is Jesus Christ the Saviour of any *unbelievers?*'

No, madam.

'Why, then, should any *unbeliever* believe, that Jesus Christ is his Saviour, *if he is not his Saviour?*'

I say, he is not the Saviour of any one, until he believes.

'Then, if Jesus be not the Saviour of the *unbeliever,* until he *believes,* the *unbeliever* is called upon to believe a lie. It appears to me, sir, that Jesus is the complete Saviour of *unbelievers;* and that unbelievers are called upon to believe the truth; and that, by *believing they are saved in their own apprehension, saved from all those dreadful fears* which are consequent upon a state of conscious condemnation."

No, madam; you are dreadfully, I trust not fatally, misled. Jesus never was, nor never will be, the Saviour of any unbeliever.

'Do you think Jesus is your Saviour, sir?'

I hope he is.

'Were you *always* a believer, sir?"

No, madam.

'Then you were once an unbeliever; that is, you once believed that Jesus Christ was not your Saviour. Now, as you say, he never *was,* nor never *will be,* the Saviour of any *unbeliever;* as you were once an *unbeliever,* he never can be your Saviour.'

He never was my Saviour till I belived.

'Did he never die for you, till you believed, sir?'

Here I was extremely embarrassed, and most devoutly wished myself out of her habitation; I sighed bitterly, expressed deep commisseration for those souls who had nothing but head-knowledge; drew out my watch, *discovered it was late;* and, recollecting an engagement, observed it was time to take leave.

PREFACE.

Hearing an *Apostle* say, that he used not the excellencies of speech, nor the enticing words of man's wisdom, when he came preaching the Gospel of *Jesus* amongst the Gentiles: I conclude, that what was *then* useless, is altogether as unnecessary *now*. Truth needs no art, but manifests itself by plainness of speech, in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.

I believe I may say, without uncharitable censure, that mankind in the general judge according to appearance, and not with righteous judgment; the flowery style, the swelling word of vanity alluring to the flesh, is that, which (by reason of the depraved senses) is most pleasing to the ear, and striking to the mind, it being not important, whether it contain any matter or not: The Truth itself, being seldom that which the reader falls in love with; it is language, sounds, and pomp of words, that enamours a fluttering world.

To urge, that the allurements and elegance of speech adorns the truth, and removing the prejudice which many have conceived against it, excites them to read with delight, &c.—I say, this plea will be found upon impartial inquiry, to be a flat contradiction of the scriptures, a stale device of Truth's grand enemy: For, let the *same subject*, be but treated of in the true apostolic language, viz. plainness of speech; and those raptured admirers of the sublime, however nervous its argument, will reject it.

To assert that the excellency of speech, and the enticing words of man's wisdom, is necessary to enforce the truths of the Gospel: is to impeach the judgment of one whose choice did not proceed of necessity, when he chose plainness of speech, such as was familiar to the meanest capacity; I mean the Apostle to the Gentiles; he looked on the enticements of speech, as a proceeding unworthy the majesty of his matter, yea rather *hurtful* than *helpful* unto his hearers; lest their faith should stand in the wisdom of man, and not in the power of God. Hence I am encouraged to hope, that the absence of those embellishments from my Treatise, (though it proceed of necessity) will neither mar the beauty, nor relax the nerves of Truth contained therein: And, what further conspires to render my expectations sanguine in this particular, is the persuasion, that there are such in the world, whose ears cannot be charmed with dead unmeaning sounds, and whose hearts are susceptible of truth, in its artless native dress.

But as the *multitude* think otherwise, and are contrary to *me*; in the grace and love of *Jesus Christ*, I stand prepared for censure, and reproach, and am not afraid of their utmost enmity: nor is it in the *power* of the world to *torment* me with disappointments, because my expectations are suited to their candour and clemency.

Through the knowledge of myself, and the observation I have made in life, I understand a little of human nature; and having learned of the Father, am not altogether ignorant of him who is the Truth: I therefore perceive, that *reproach* and the *Gospel* are inseparably connected; that it is impossible to believe, and bear witness of the *one* without being exposed to the virulence of the *other*, therefore God forbid that I should seek to avoid it, but rather meet in rejoicing, and receive it with open arms; being thereby crucified unto the world, and the world unto me.

As I make no pretension to infallibility, nay as I pretend not to the abilities of fallible authors: respecting wisdom, and letters, it will not surprise me, nor need it surprise any *body else*, if some busy critic, whose genius leads him ever in search of offal, and garbage, should pretend to detect in my book, not only bad grammar, with inaccuracies in phrase; but errors in judgment also: Nor shall this trouble me, provided he substitute in stead thereof, what consists more with the honour and glory of *Jesus Christ* our Lord, for *then* my aim and end is answered.

If I am asked in *meekness* to explain myself in any particular, wherein it is judged I have not been quite intelligible, though I cannot promise success, I find myself willing to attempt it. But, when any conceited spirit, from mere *wantonness*, majestically declares me wrong, I shall not reply; because "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient," &c.

As I do not remember to have read the author, who hath treated of the subject contained in the following tract; any farther than to drop some very brief hints of such a truth, which hath been immediately contradicted by some other position: So neither do I remember to have read any thing wrote in confutation thereof, except a few admirable pieces lately handed about; in some of which, my name stands conspicuous as an heretic. I have reasons with me very sufficient, why I take no notice of those important spirits, so as to answer them in form.

First, Respecting such that I have seen, their performances evidence beyond all controversy, that they did not understand the matter which they wrote against; and therefore treated that with contempt which was above them, being not afraid to speak evil of dignities. I would always, (unprovoked by their petulancy) answer those with silence, as being beneath my attention. I would harden my ear against the roarings of ignorance, and be utterly insensible to their invectives:

It being ridiculous to fret at the barkings of a cur, when it is the nature of the animal to be noisy. Moreover, my wise, and powerful antagonists, are generally positive without candour; yea even *infallible* in their own conceit: With such it is unlawful to reason. To see what important airs those little masters give themselves, strikes one at once with laughter and contempt; and constrains the *serious* mind to commiserate the abject state of man, which nothing more fully discovers, than the egregious vanity, and insolence, of absolute determinations without reason. For my part, after having abjured the *Pope* of *Rome*, I can never submit to any infallible chair of an inferior sort: therefore their positions hath no weight with me, where they produce not their reasons, and such reasons as immediately relate to the matter in hand, and take in its meaning.

Until then, they may think as high as they please of themselves, (as vain conceit seems necessary to keep up their spirits) I must of necessity respect them, so, as to take no notice of their anathemas, but boldly confess that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers.

Another reason, why I do not choose to answer (in form) those antagonists who have as yet appeared in public against me, is, that personal pique, disappointments, self-interest, &c. was not the least powerful motive with them in their opposition; and where those considerations influence the mind, it is an easy matter to find fault, yea, *prejudice* is dexterous at *making* faults where there are none. I would not answer such as these, lest, by inflaming them, I should drive them to an utter renunciation of Christianity; lest they should cast off, and reject that measure of truth: which at present they *may* have, only because (from personal enmity) they may be in all things my opposites. For, where a spirit of resentment and self-seeking takes the lead, it is not strange to see men change their maxims, lest they should be thought to agree in any particular with the objects of their envy; it is a pity the evidence that some of my opponents are already too guilty of this charge, is so full.

Besides, there were many other stimulating considerations, well nigh as powerful as that of personal enmity, and revenge, which made them opponents to me, and my doctrine: such as making their peace with the world, at the expense of the *persons* and *matter*, trampled on. They were well aware, of its being a very likely method to gain the favour of mankind, in the general, especially of the pious populace; the light in which things stand at present, administering them abundant opportunity for so doing, it being shrewdly foreseen, that *prejudice* against the person and matter exploded, would not permit the world to inquire impartially, into the merits of the cause. They could not but be greatly encouraged, being assured of victory, before they came to the trial. It might reasonably be expected from hence, that their exclamations and invectives, would have a large run in the world; to the great advantage of the authors: this thought had a sweet feeling in it. But, I believe, there has been a disappointment here; it should have been considered, that the Person, and doctrine, which they bespatter, are not sufficiently popular and formidable, to raise a general call for their confutations, and preservatives.—The *deliverance*, is always proportionable to the *danger*, nor can the *latter* be great, from what is only the object of hatred, and contempt, and not of fear: had this been considered, their expectations had not been so sanguine. I might, by appealing to *human nature*, prove, that those my reasons, for not taking any farther notice of my antagonists, are not mere *surmise*; which may possibly be false: But I decline this, and declare myself well assured of what I have said, from circumstances sufficiently convincing: however, I shall bid them all farewell in the words of the poet,

If want provoke, or Madness makes them print,
I wage no war with *Bedlam*, nor the *Mint*.

It is not my aim in this Treatise, to defend by external *argument*, against gain-sayers, what I conceive to be the truth, as it is in *Jesus*; but simply to throw such a light upon the matter, that as it is true, it might appear in a measure intelligible also. I was for a long season, after satisfied of the redemption which is in *Christ*; very uneasy at times, concerning the equity thereof: Indeed the hints which occasioned those disputings in my mind, were merely accidental; for having received much consolation in the first persuasion of redemption, the forgiveness of sins, in the blood of *Jesus*, I judged myself sufficient, (from the argument I fancied I was master of, and that resistless authority, which I dreampt attended my words, when I spake of divine things) for the conviction of the most *hardened*, and *averse* to salvation by *Jesus*; and accordingly, as opportunity offered, failed not to exert myself upon this principle: at length I met with one, who (though his zeal, and self-sufficiency, bare no proportion to mine;) was far my superior in understanding: after he had with *coolness* heard what I had to say, he asked me wherein was the justice, and equity, of one man's suffering death, yea even the torments of hell, for another: so contrary to reason, and also to the testimony of scripture, which often declares, that the righteous shall not suffer for the wicked; but that every man's sin should be charged upon his own head, &c. I was not prepared for such a question as this; and was therefore involved in a difficulty, which I could not obviate. I appealed to the *sovereignty* of God, it was granted that God was *sovereign*, and that from his *sovereign* pleasure, he created us, redeemed us, &c. having nothing to move him to it, but his own will; yet he wills nothing but what is just, and equitable, because he is just when he judgeth, and justifieth. I would then have urged, that as God is infinitely above us; his thoughts, and ways, above ours; we are not to conceive of *him*, his *jus-*

tice and *equity*, according to our low, and scanty notions thereof. It was answered, if I granted that mankind had any true notion of justice, and equity, though but in the smallest degree, then what is contrary to *this*, must be much *more so* to God, whose justice and truth, is infinite, pure, and eternal. I urged other matters, to as little purpose, and though I confidently continued in my former assertion, yet I was forced to abate much of my self-importance, and very often afterwards, was greatly disturbed in my mind, on account of these things. As far as my capacity would admit, I applied myself to reading; and read a great many books, treating of redemption by *Jesus Christ*; and found them all run in one channel, viz. that man being a debtor, and transgressor, and unable to save himself, *Jesus Christ* became his surety under an engagement to pay his debts, and to bear his punishment: The *equity* of which, is generally resolved into the sovereignty of God, or accounted for, from the willingness of *Christ* (as an *independent divine person*) to suffer, in the sinner's stead: whilst others satisfy themselves, with the bare positive assertion, that it is equitable, for one person to be surety for another, not only in case of debt; but even in capital offences. Those resolutions, I read over and over, but rather more *perplexed*, than *satisfied* thereby. In vain it was, that the most pious, and orthodox writers, and preachers, explained the matter thus: I was *constrained* to despise all human authority, in things of this nature; especially where there was not the *shadow* of reason, and equity. I applied myself more carefully, to the reading and study of the scriptures; as without notes, or expositions: submitting in spirit, unto him, who at first dictated, and hath taken it upon him to make us understand them. And thence it was, I discerned according to that scanty measure I have attained, what, I conceive to be the harmony of divine truth, *viz.* the *union* of *Christ* and the *Church*; and how clear the equity of redemption, by the blood of *Jesus*, appears in this truth, in the following treatise I have attempted to show. And, because I have thereby found a retreat in *Jesus*, from the face of the enemy, and all his dangerous insinuations, whereby he would have shaken the foundations, I publish it to others, that if there should be amongst my readers, *such* who are tried, with trials of like nature, they may possibly have instruction sealed, to their peace, and consolation. It is also probable, that such may read, whom either prejudice, or lack of opportunity, will not permit to hear. —There are generally but few, amongst the great multitude, who inquire into the merits of the cause they engage in: Tradition, received from their Fathers, zeal and affection for their leaders, spirit them on to persuasion beyond scruple, that they are in the truth. It is very probable, there are others, who simply crediting the scripture testimony, that *Jesus Christ* died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, are happy in that truth; without once inquiring into the equity thereof, or ever thinking it necessary so to do. The reality of their peace, I will not pretend to deny, as they believe the facts, which the gospel relates, and proposes, as the joy and peace of mankind. But yet, the necessity of examining the equity thereof, remains; as it is evident, first from the scriptures treating so plentifully of it: to deny the necessity of attending to which teaching, would be the highest arrogance. Again, though they may hitherto have escaped the temptation *within*, and the argument of such *without*, who walk enemies to the cross of Christ; yet it proves not, that they shall *always* escape: therefore it is necessary, they should, from the faithful apprehension of their *union* with *Christ*, be so rooted, and grounded in love, that their joy may abide, and no man take it from them. Again, it is necessary that knowing God, they may glorify him *as God*, who, being infinitely glorious, and exalted, in all the perfections of his nature, hath in this gracious plan, most wonderfully exhibited that divine harmony, which to *man*, is so rich a proof of his unity.

As to my talking so much of *Christ*, his person and excellencies, my continual endeavour to point *him* out as the *way*, *the truth*, *and the life*; I hope, even such who would be thought the *guardians* of true godliness, will bear with me a little, when I give them my reasons for so doing. First, I am under very great obligations to him, which coming to light every day, more and more, constrains me to speak of him, and to esteem him very precious. Again, I may be excused a little, because testimonies of this nature are very rare: whilst *Moses*, hath them who preach *him*, every Sabbath day, in every synagogue. And whilst most of the publications on divinity, are now entitled *practical*; as the daily advertisements bear witness, (than which, there is *nothing* according to my apprehension, more fully proves the decline of real christianity) I hope so insignificant a person as I, may be indulged with saying somewhat of Jesus Christ. The phrase *practical*, when applied to divinity, seems to be made use of, in direct opposition to *Christ*; and that, which *immediately* treats of him; as though *he* was dry theory, a fable or an idle speculation only. Will it be answered, that the wickedness of the age is *such*, as renders it needful to write and preach *practically* as called. Is not this giving up the cause to the enemy, and a tacit acknowledgment that the article *Christ* is insufficient? Yea, that this article rather tends to corrupt mankind, and promote bad morals, or indeed to say thus: fain would we reform the world, we have used all means to do them good, we have tried *Christ*, we have preached and wrote of *him*, but *he* would not do; he only made all things worse, how can *he* be of God whose disciples break the Sabbath day? &c. we are therefore obliged to lay *him* aside, and betake ourselves to the law of *Moses*, with other good rules which pious men have planned; and by insisting upon their living up to those (promising salvation unto such who *do*;

and threatening all that do *not*, with *eternal damnation*) we hope to stem the torrent of vice, and turn mankind into the paths of virtue and piety.

Have your inventions answered the end intended; are they more reformed than they were in the days of the Apostles, who made it their business to preach a crucified *Jesus?* where is the Church, or society of Christians *now*, who attain to this character, "The multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soul, neither said any of them, that aught of the things which he possessed, was his own, but they had all things common?" Acts iv. 32. This was effected by the simple testimony of *Jesus*, his death, and resurrection; the people were *then* taught, that they were the body of *Christ in particular, and members one of another*. Whereas, the more modern doctrines, have taught mankind to respect each other as *aliens*, each esteeming of himself better than another; imagining he has property, distinct from his brother, yea, even in spirituals; he looks on his *own* things, and not on the things of *another*. Thus, the modern doctrines, and traditions of men, are calculated to promote self-love, spiritual pride, bigotry, and hatred of each other, instead of love. Therefore it is, that the morals of mankind are as bad as ever, notwithstanding the necessity, and benefit of holiness, and good works, is daily sounded in their ears. And even amongst the *reformed*, as they would be thought, is there not envying, strife, contention, backbiting, evil-speaking uncharitableness, the putting forth of the finger, revenge, inhumanity, with every evil work and disposition? And indeed, this is the genuine fruit of the doctrines of the age; for where people are taught to distinguish between saints and sinners, and to think themselves holier than their neighbours, it is not strange that they use them ill. As this is so general, I suppose it will not greatly irritate, that a few worthless men, without character, or popularity, should make *Christ* their subject, and be ever *preaching* or *writing* of him. It is to be feared that being *merely* orthodox, in point of works, with a desire at times of *doing*, and at other times, a sigh and sorrow for *not* doing, with a zeal for propagating the doctrine, is that which *soothes* and *keeps* in peace, the consciences of many, who otherwise are very sensible of their deficiency in this particular: And to talk of *practice*, and know nothing more of it; yea, in short, to talk of it without keeping the *whole* law, is such a deception, where *scripture* authority is admitted, (yea or even what reason suggests of the nature of the Divine Being) as cannot be accounted for, but by the pride, bewitchery, and madness, which we are naturally involved in. Persons of this cast, please themselves, like the kings of *Bedlam*, who imagine their rags a purple robe, and their heap of straw, a throne; and are very angry with all, who will not humour their vain conceit.

As to the zealous promoters of the doctrine of works, in opposition to the complete salvation of *Jesus Christ* our Lord, we know what *he* says of them: That they lay heavy burdens upon men's shoulders, which they *themselves* will not touch, with one of their fingers: and the apostle says, neither they *themselves* keep the law, but desire to have *you* circumcised, that they may glory in *your* flesh. Thus, we are not always to judge of men by their sounds, or to imagine a man greatly pious, because he talks of works, or writes practical treatises; nay, it is certainly reasonable, and just, for us to withhold our credit, and shut our ears, until his *tempers*, and *actions* speak: and of *such*, I have no need to be afraid, however zealous they may be, for as mercy, compassion, and charity, are none of the least prevalent, in the composition of true piety, their precious balms, can never break my head.

Nothing is more probable, than that it will be objected: I am an enemy to good works, or; that convinced by the holy practice of some particulars, amongst the professors of religion, I pine with envy; affecting to *despise* what I cannot *attain* unto. To which I answer, I am far from being an ememy to *good* works: that which is truly *good*, when manifest, always commands my respect: nor can *I* conceive, how any man, when convinced of the good, should hate it for *being* so. I do not mean to deny, that the truly good, is at any time the object of man's hatred; but then we always suspect that of *evil*, which we allow ourselves to hate; and if from the corruption of nature, we hate the good, because it forbids us the gratification of the sensual appetites, yet even *that* hatred, doth not totally exclude from the bosom, a secret approbation of the *good*. But, as weakness, and ignorance, are (accidentally) properties of human nature, we are not always capable of distinguishing, *perfectly*, between *good* and *evil*. I *am* not, cannot, possibly be an enemy to *good* works; but then, I must have some more incontestable proof of goodness, before I become an admirer, than ignorant *roarings*, the clamours, and important airs of vain pretenders. When *I* consider good works, as mentioned in the scriptures, I would distinguish between them, as *spiritually* and *morally* good; the *former*, which merits the divine complacency, mankind are incapable of performing at any time; as I could easily prove, was there occasion. The *latter*, which respects *beneficence* one towards another, as reasonable beings, as fellow-creatures, or if you please, from a *higher* consideration, as *the body of Christ in particular, and members one of another*, is what the apostle recommends, in that oft cited passage; "That they which have believed in God, may be careful to maintain good works, these things are good and profitable unto men." Tit. iii. 8. And again verse 14. *let ours also learn to maintain good works, for necessary uses*. That *bread* is profitable to the *hungry*, *drink* to the *thirsty*, *clothes* to the *naked*, and *honesty* in all your dealings, unto *such* whom you are concerned with; I

say, that it is profitable thus mutually to bless each other, is not to be doubted: profitable to the *receiver* and profitable to the *giver*, as it entitles him to the respect, and esteem of his fellow-creatures. Hence may the *beneficent* and *benefited*, both be said to profit thereby; and therefore are the works called good, and said to be profitable unto men, yea, of necessary use, thus, "Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man," Job xxxv. 8. But let us not mistake the apostle's meaning, and imagine them profitable unto us, with God; to our salvation and acceptance with *Him*; this would be to renounce the Lord who bought us, to pretend that we have, whereof we may boast, even before God: and thus believing a lie, fall into the strong delusion. As a friend to benevolence, equity, and peace amongst mankind, I should be glad to see those good works abound: and from a right principle, would encourage them with all my power. But, when men begin to speak of these things, and consider them as *spiritual* good, as well-pleasing, and acceptable with God, as righteousness, holiness, or fruitfulness before *Him*; or, when making this their sanctification, they go about to prove their faith thereby, inwardly respecting those motions as *proofs* and *marks* of their grace and Christianity: I say, when *this* is the case, with ardent zeal, tenfold more burning than they can ever show for the works of their own hands, we will prove all their righteousness to be filthy rags: dross and dung, exposing the pride, vain glory, hypocrisy, covetousness, self-love, &c. of all their works, words, and thoughts, protesting with all our souls, against bringing the *blind* and *lame* into the house of the Lord: for as much as we conceive, that the honour of *Jesus Christ*, and the real happiness of mankind, is greatly concerned here. And, if for *this*, I am deemed an enemy unto good works, so be it. I will remember the word of the Lord, who said, "The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil," John vii. 7. And, as to my conviction, received from the most upright amongst men, from their holy example, &c., the God, and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, before whom I stand, knoweth that I lie not when I declare, that there is but *one* man, (the man Christ Jesus,) amongst all the individuals of *Adam's race*, whose example I admire and can perfectly approve of: by *his* example, I confess I am deeply convinced, not to *envy*, but to the most profound admiration! And, though I see that in *him*, unto which I cannot attain, nay, it would be the highest arrogance in *me*, or any *other* mortal, to seek or expect, by works of righteousness, imitations, &c., to expect to attain unto *his* perfection; yet, I cannot despise, but must for ever reverence, admire, and wonder before *Him*. When I except *this* man, I believe that word of the Lord applicable unto all the *others*, where he says, "The best of them is as a brier, the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge." Micah, vii. 4. "For every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders." Jer. ix. 4. Thus saith the Lord, and thus I think: and therefore cannot behold any man upon earth, with an envious or evil eye, on the account of his dazzling perfections; nor is it possible I should ever despise *good* works, on this account. But, whenever I have spoken slightly of *human goodness*, it is because I am convinced it is not good; but a false shew, and lying vanity; and therefore as a *falsehood*, always to be opposed. Another reason is, because these vain pretensions gaining ground amongst mankind, tends greatly to the dishonour of *Jesus Christ*, and his gospel; and to make void the grace of God. Again, it tends to distress the soul, who is convinced of the weakness of human nature, according to the scriptures; and to keep him from the rest that remaineth for the people of God; nor can any one rejoice in it but the *deceived*, who know not themselves, nor the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Again, it encourages to party: its warmest advocates being of the number of those who *separate themselves*. And yet, nothing more fully establishes that exploded maxim, *Let us do evil that good may come*. It is *this* which *allows*, yea even *authorizes*, one man to think himself holier than *another*, and consequently to say in his heart, *stand by, come not near me, I am holier than thou*. From hence, instead of *loving* his brother, he takes an occasion to *judge* him, *despise* and *hate* him: yea, from this very principle, proceeds all the animosity, pride, backbitings, whisperings, contentions, &c. which abound, amongst all the various sects of religious people: yea, such is their zeal for the *good* as considered in the creature, that (least they should turn from it) they will not scruple to break *any*, yea *every* commandment in the book of God; and to run a tilt against the *whole* of the perfect example which the holy *Jesus* hath exhibited; only to keep their votaries steady to their favoured plan. And, lest you should think my assertion *too* strong, you need only for your conviction, put your head into some of those places, where *human goodness*, or *inward holiness*, or, *that* work of the *Spirit upon the heart*, which opposes the free salvation of mankind by the blood of *Jesus*, is the *chief* or *continual* subject: for though the *terms* are different, the *matter* is the same; I say, put but your head into any of those places, and you will *hear* and be convinced *soon*, if you are impartial, of the truth whereof I affirm. You may *there* hear a person in defence of *inward holiness*, (and as he *pretends*, with a pure zeal to promote the same) raving with all the energy and eloquence of pride, censoriousness, slander, cruelty, and ignorance; against *such*, whose names are not in *his* legend, bespattering them with the epithets of *dogs*, *swine*, *devils*, *heretics*, &c. threatening them with eternal destruction, warning the people against them, as the *pest* and *plague* of the earth; withal, giving such

descriptions of them that their disciples knowing them, may learn to *hate them*, and copy their pastor's example, in speaking all manner of evil of them. This is not only Satan rebuking *sin*, but Satan propagating *holiness* also, *a doing evil, that good may come*. But, if it shall be objected, that our Saviour and the apostles used these epithets, when speaking of unbelievers, I answer when they used them, it was, (by showing mankind what they naturally were) to enhance the grace whereby they were saved: and were commonly given to *such*, who trusting in themselves that they were righteous, despised others. Besides, our Saviour and his apostles, had *power*, when they applied those characters to any individual, to demonstrate by undeniable signs, the truth of what they spake: and that they were not revilers. As for instance, when *Saul*, who is called *Paul*, set his eyes upon *Elymas*, the sorcerer, and called him a child of the devil, an enemy to all righteousness, &c. he *proved* the truth of what he said, by striking him blind. God, thus bearing witness unto his accusation. As with *Peter* also, in the case of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*. But, where any, who would be thought infallible *now*, are for ever filling their mouths with the apostolic censures, and anathemas, without being able to show the like proof of their infallibility; they are to be respected as proud, arrogant, conceited; and rather railing, reviling accusers of their brethren, than apostles of *Christ*: yea, as the offerers of strange fire before the Lord, and not the fire which fell from God upon the altar, when *Moses* and *Aaron* blessed the people. How ridiculous must it be! to *read*, or *hear* a man writing, or preaching up holiness; which is the love of God and his neighbour; in *such* a spirit, and terms, as (rendering the Divine Being so implacable, and difficult of access, and his neighbours so much worse than himself) hath certainly a more powerful tendency to promote enmity, hatred, and contempt, than love. Thus men *preach* and *write* of goodness, until *love* entirely ceaseth. And of *faith*, until it dwindle as *small* as a grain of mustard seed; until all hope, and charity for their neighbours, is wholly lost. *Nothing* is more common, than for men to preach, and dispute, for holiness; yea, for its being in *themselves*, until quarrelling with the opponent, there appear nothing in them, but the most *unholy* tempers and dispositions. And yet, they must be thought *holy*, and that in themselves, though our every sense testify the contrary. Sure man is scarcely a reasonable creature, to be thus imposed upon, or what is worse; he is a most *bewitched* and *infatuated* creature. O! Thou great archetype of true holiness, *Jesus Christ*: thou *only* art holy, thou *only* art the Lord; and thou knowest wherefore I thus speak. It is because mankind would *rob* thee, by assuming what belongs to *thee* only; it is because the principle of self is such that they would found a dominion in grace; from a supposition of superior holiness, use their fellow-creatures ill.

I have thus spoken, thou knowest; because I apprehended what I have spoken *against* to be utterly false; a grand deception, and yet the idol of mankind. Thou art *my* standard, and everlasting pattern of true goodness; and I always conclude that whoso gathereth not with thee, scattereth: nor can I ever believe *that* to be *holy* or *good* which is contrary to thee: unto thy grace and keeping, I commit my all; and that thou shouldest bless what I have written, unto the glory, and praise of thy venerable name: and respecting my readers, unto their conviction, even to that eternal life, which is in thee, I pray.

It may easily be seen, that I aim only at illustrating that grand capital proposition of the saviour's: *I am the truth*.

To do which, I am not afraid to tread the most unfrequented path, and walk therein undisturbed, notwithstanding the clamorous accusations of singularity, novelty, and heresy. *Affectation* of being singular, from selfish views, I hold abominable: and as an *equal* abomination, the attempt to shun the cross, when standing in the path of truth.

Respecting the *matter* and *scope* of the following treatise, I am above uncertainty therein: nor can the *piddling pedant*, who feeds on garbage, the detection of errors in grammar, the obsoleteness and impropriety of words; exclaiming at want of literature in authors: neither the orthodox *precise*, who sits in the infallible chair, and condemns as heresy, whatsoever squares not with his dogma; supported by *creeds*, confessions of faith, and the positive determinations of the most *sound* and *pious* expositors: I say, neither the *one* nor the *other*, will be able to shake my confidence, respecting the truth I aim at illustrating: which is, that *Jesus Christ* our Lord, is ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, and that in the "new man there is neither Greek, nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, but Christ is all, and in all." As to my defects as an *Author*, I hope I have by confessing my insufficiency, and renouncing all pretensions to any such abilities, *anticipated* my examiners in their censures: but if time should shew the contrary, I have an infallible remedy in silence, as there is nothing appears to me worth contending about, besides the *faith once delivered to the saints*, which contention is *spiritual*, and manifest through the whole of the Christian life; against all *without* and *within* that would pervert, and draw the mind from *Christ*: and consists not in vain jangling, perverse disputings, and contentions with each other, to the subverting of the mind, as many have vainly imagined: feeding, and pleasing themselves, with the fond conceit of eminence in faith, and knowledge; because they were better versed in argument than their opponents, or could run them down by the mere dint of positiveness, and much speaking.

The *latter* I would always shun, as contrary to *Christ*: but in the *former I* would be found, hurting no man, but earnestly contending for the faith; unto the edification of *all*, whose servant I am, for *Christ's* sake.

UNION.

THE doctrine of *Union* between *Christ* and his *Church* renders the system of man's redemption by his blood, beautifully consistent, and worthy its glorious Author.

It explains the harmony of the divine perfections, and reveals God, acting according to the principles of his nature, in the salvation of mankind by *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

Hence, it appears greatly worthy of our consideration; and in treating thereof, I would observe the following method:

I. Attempt the proof of *Union* as necessary to the equity of salvation by *Jesus*.

II. Explain, as far as I may, the nature thereof.

III. Hint its antiquity, and unchangeable duration.

IV. Point out a few of the never-failing springs of consolation, arising therefrom.

The *Union* of *Christ*, and his *Church*, appears to me, a truth of such importance, that I can see no consistency in the doctrine of salvation by *Jesus*, without it.* My present design, is to render, with as much plainness of speech as possible, the reasons of my ideas; intending thereby, to prove at once, the necessity, and utility of this grace.

I. I apprehend it necessary to the harmony of the divine perfections. For, as all the hopes, and expectations, of the creature from the Creator, are founded upon the supposition of his goodness; men of every sentiment, will agree to this proposition, God is good.

And, that we may rightly conceive of him under this character, it is as necessary we should see him *justice*, *holiness*, and *truth*; as *mercy* and *love*: since all those properties must unite, and act in perfect harmony, to constitute real goodness. Thus considering the almighty, we are verily persuaded, that as a God infinite in goodness, he *doth* not, *will* not, act from one attribute, to the dishonour of another. Nor may we expect any exhibition of *mercy*, and *love*, but in a way of *justice*, *puri-*

* The method of grace and salvation, according to Union, is not at all contradictory to the sovereignty of God: that being sufficiently manifest, where he hath decreed the honour, and the glory of his Son, as the principal, and leading maxim in all his divine appointments. "He was before all things, and by him all things consist." The creation of man, and his being appointed to obtain salvation, by *Jesus Christ*, is a farther proof of divine sovereignty; nothing moving the Almighty thereunto, but his own will: Yet this hinders not the *method* and *execution* of this grace, its being according to equity, and *that such*, as we by *reason* and *Revelation* may properly conceive of. But when sovereignty is introduced from first, to last; to the utter exclusion of equity, which is often done; (as a palliative for man's ignorance in divine things) the consequences attending are dangerous. First, as it depreciates the sacrifice of *Christ*, and makes death unnecessary: since *Absoluteness* might have remitted the offence without shedding of blood.—Or if it is hinted, that this condition *took place* and was *accepted* from mere sovereign pleasure only: Then, of consequence it was not proportionable, as an atonement unto the offence: and its dignity as the blood of God denied: nor (upon such a supposition) was it necessary that our Saviour should be more than man. But, if the scriptures dignify the blood of *Jesus*, in saying, that God purchased the Church: *with his own blood*, if *he* was made a curse for us: if *his* sufferings as the punishment of sin was equal to the offence; then was it accepted, not from *mere absoluteness*, but from the harmony, and full consent of mercy, and truth, righteousness, and peace. Again, such an use made of divine sovereignty, would be to reject the testimony of *Moses* and the prophets; where they declare that God will not hold the sinner guiltless, nor acquit him without the shedding of blood: even the blood of the offender. To throw a light upon which, and to instruct the people in the mystery thereof, they were taught from the union subsisting between themselves, and their sacrifices, to respect the blood, and death, of their sacrifices as their own: and as such, was the blood taken by the High Priest into the holy presence; where the names of the people engraven on the stones of memorial, were present with the blood: confessing it, and claiming the benefits resulting from the shedding thereof, as a punishment adequate to their sin.—Which blessings, were remission and justification to life. Thus through all the dispensations committed to *Moses*, the symbols of equity are inseparably connected with the figures of salvation by *Jesus*.—From all which it appears, that God's sovereign grace, and will to save mankind, hath been executed according to strictest truth, and equity: and such is the wisdom, that God is unspeakably glorious in the honour and glory his *Son* hath obtained thereby: and mankind infinitely advantaged.—Should it be objected, that the Apostle himself resolves certain queries in the sovereignty of God; saying "who art thou that replies against God, shall the thing formed, say unto him who formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" &c. I answer, the Apostle was not speaking here of salvation and the method thereof, but of the people: some of whom, as respecting the *Knowledge* of the truth, were taken whilst others were left. The wherefore some, believe, and others do not, is not the object of faith; nor does it fall within my line to shew; and should I be inquisitive, the answer is recorded; *What is that to thee, follow thou me*, such inquiries being more curious than profitable; our Saviour will give no other answer: it being not necessary to our peace and happiness. And as God has not thought fit to reveal himself in that particular, we are constrained through ignorance, to resolve it into his sovereignty, though, it is not to be doubted, but the time will come, when the equity of this, and all his ways with man, will clearly appear. "And ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God." Ezek. xiv. 23.

ty, and *truth*. Therefore, it doth not appear how God from a principle of mercy, and peace, towards mankind, could punish sin upon *Christ*, without the concurrence of righteousness, and truth: nor can this concurrence, or harmony, be proved; without *union* between *Christ*, and those for whom he endured the *cross*, and *despised the shame*.

1st, Because, contrary to truth: which declareth that every man shall die for his own sin. 2 Cor. xxv. 4. Deut. xxiv. 26. And again, "*whosoever hath sinned against me, Him will I blot out of my book*," Exod. xxxii. 33. This was the answer of God unto *Moses*, when he would have atoned for the sin of the people, by suffering in their stead. Nor will he destroy the righteous with the wicked, because the judge of all the earth doth right. Gen. xviii. 25. "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and the righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked." Exod. xxiii. 7. Thus the voice of truth is, that the sinner shall die for his own sin: and that the righteous shall not suffer. "Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isai. iii. 10, 11. This is the language of *truth*: one jot, or tittle of which, shall not fail; though heaven, and earth, should pass away: therefore, such an *union*, or relation, between *Christ* and his *Church*, as gives *Him* the right of redemption, and brings *Him* under that character which is obnoxious to punishment, is absolutely necessary, that his sufferings for sin, might accord with the declarations, and demands of truth.

2dly. It is contrary to *justice* to afflict the innocent: to punish, and destroy him, is cruelty, and injustice. Without the consideration of *union*, where is the justice of charging the black rebellion, and crying guilt of *man* upon the pure and spotless head of *Jesus?* but God doth nothing unworthy of himself, or contrary to the harmony of his nature. To say that the undertaking on *Christ's* part was voluntary, neither proves, nor implies, his right to suffer: because it is not his *willingness*, but the approbation of *divine justice*, which proves his right to taste the death of the cross. And, as the nature and property of justice, is always its own rule of acting; it cannot admit of the innocent's being punished, nor of the transgressor's being acquitted: For God the righteous judge, hath pronounced a woe unto such who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him, Isaiah v. 23. I am aware of an objection here, from such who would establish imputation, without relation, or *union*, viz. that the law admits of one man's being surety, or bondsman for another; and can justly oblige him to fulfil his engagements: to this, I answer. It is most absurd to make human laws a standard for God's method of dealing with mankind; except, it be first proved that those laws are fully conformable to the law of God; in justice, and equity: until this be proved, what man decrees, or what the law of nations is, hath no weight at all when brought to teach the way of God with man. Besides, I know not of any human laws, which admit of suretyship in *capital* offences; and sin is not only a *debt*, for which suretyship is sometimes admitted, but a *transgression*, a *crime*, capital in the highest sense, only atoned for by the shedding of blood; by the *death*, yea, by the *eternal death* of the sinner: which justice must inflict, before it can be properly satisfied; nor can it possibly admit of a surety here: because, it can only punish Him, whom it *first* finds guilty; and that not by reckoning him to *be* what he is *not*, according to human quibbles; but according to artless, reasonable, divine equity; which can only declare such guilty, on whom the fault is found, and can only find the fault on such who have committed it: *We* only committed the fault, upon *us* only can it be found: Therefore, without such an *union* between *Christ*, and *us*, as exposes *us*, in *his* person, to judgment, and condemnation; the harmony of the divine perfections, doth not appear in the things which he suffered, because contrary to truth and justice.

Again, it is contrary to *mercy*, as mercy may not, consistent with its own nature, trespass the limits of truth and justice. But, if *Jesus* suffered for sin, without such an union to the sinner, as made his sufferings and blood, to be regarded as that of the offender; though there be an appearance of mercy towards *us*, there is great lack of it towards *Him*, who suffered for sin, unjustly charged upon him. Such is not the nature of infinite goodness, to shew mercy to *one*, through injustice to *another*: But, if united to the sinner, there is a *consistency*, yea, a *divine equity*, in his sufferings; and mercy appears to *man*; where God hath provided himself a lamb for the burnt-offering: the like appears to *Christ*, where God hath engaged to support him under his just sufferings, to hold his hand, and to keep him, when he gave him a purifier to the people. *This* is mercy, tempered with justice, and in the faithful view of *this*, every believer can sing of mercy and judgment.

Again, it is contrary to *wisdom*; yet God hath marked out all his ways in infinite wisdom: But that system which is not founded in equity, hath no exhibition of true wisdom in it; nay rather accuses God (if imputed to him) either as lacking wisdom when concerting his plan, or else, of *unwillingness* to give us a specimen thereof: and consequently of denying his own praise, and man's happiness; which consists in admiring, and glorifying him, in the discoveries of his infinite wisdom. For, where is the wisdom of imputing sin to Christ which he had no right to bear? and whence his right, if not from union to the sinner? But grant *this*, then indeed the great deep breaks open, and wisdom, infinite wisdom appears: whilst each beholder, with wonder cries, O! the depth! who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

It is also contrary to *love*: the scriptures are

very explicit, in declaring the Father's love to the Son; but the punishment of this Son, for crimes he stood in no relation to, implies a defect in love: yea, rather a greater love to *man*, the offender, than to his well-beloved *Son*, who was the "brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person:" and is withal a manifest contradiction to the divine testimony, which asserts the pre-eminence of *Jesus* in all things. Withal, to love the impure, is inconsistent with the morality of the divine nature; therefore, where the Father giving his Son is at any time mentioned as an evidence of his love to mankind, it is a proof of his superlative love unto him, * and a manifestation of his glory; the descent of his humbled life, and bloody death, being the appointed depth, from which he was to ascend above all heavens, that he might fill all things; and that he might thus inherit the boundless, infinite riches of his Father's love, it was necessary he should suffer what he did; and, that the extendings of the love of *God*, to *man*, might be *subordinate* unto the love he bears to the eternal Son of his bosom, his *union* to those for whom he suffered the death of the cross appears absolutely necessary.

The *union* of *Christ*, and his *Church*, is a necessary consideration, for the right explication of the scriptures: without which, they would want a key, and a great part of them be altogether unintelligible, and without any just propriety in phrase. To prove which, I need only note a few of the numerous passages which are pregnant with this matter. And here I design not the least intimation of my quoting all the scriptures which positively speak of this truth; nor will I affirm, that those mentioned, are of the whole, the most pertinent to the purpose, but having their light and perfection in *Jesus Christ* our Lord; and being (as I conceive,) such as treat of *His union* with the *Church*, I oft make use of them, as a confirmation of my doctrine, when discoursing on this subject: therefore, occurring the more readily to my memory, I mention *them* in particular, as "In thy book all my members were written." Psalm. cxxxix. 16. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Eph. v. 30. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." 1 Cor. xii. 25. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." 1 Cor. xii. 12. "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Cor. xii. 27. "He is the head of the body, the Church." Coll. i. 18. "The head over all things to his Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. i. 22, 23. "Ye are complete in him." Coll. ii. 10. "We being many are one body in Christ, and members one of another." Rom. xii. 5. "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross." Eph. ii. 16. "And they two shall be one flesh; this is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Eph. v. 31, 32. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one." Heb. ii. 11. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John xvii. 22, 23. "And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter, so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good unto the potter to make it." Jer. xviii. 4. "She was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Shall a nation be born at once?" Isaiah lxvi. 7, 8. "In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ:" Coll. ii. 12. "Buried with him in baptism." Coll. ii. 11. "I am crucified with Christ." Gall. ii. 20. "Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?" Psalms xlix. 5. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Peter ii. 24. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him." Rom. vi. 6. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Coll. iii. 3. "Dead to the law by the body of Christ." Rom. vii. 4. "If we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him." Rom. vi. 8. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. vi. 11. "Thy dead shall live, my dead body shall they arise." Isaiah. xxvi. 9 "After two days will he revive us, in the third day will he raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Hosea vi. 2. "Hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Pet." i. 3. "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. iii. 21. "Now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death." Coll. i. 21, 22. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." 2 Cor. v. 19. "And

* *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, &c.* The superlative love of God to his Son, is manifest here: where the valuableness of the gift so infinitely preferable to the receiver, is, in order to enhance the grace intelligibly hinted. God's giving his *Son*, and giving himself, is a synonymy in scripture; and confirms the above proposition; the lesser being always blessed of the greater. Only considering, that all things were made *for him*, and that *he is the appointed heir of all things*, it will appear in brightness, that the honour and glory of the beloved Son, and of the Father in him, was first and principal in view, when he was given for the life of the world; consequently, God's love to the world, was subordinate unto that wherewith he loved his Son; and all his grace and kindness nnto the world, subservient unto his glory.

was raised again for our justification." Rom. iv. 25. "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." Eph. ii. 6. "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Eph. ii. 5. "And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Coll. ii. 13. "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him." Eph. i. 3, 4. "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2. "Because as he is, so are we in this world." 1 John iv. 17. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. "He hath made us accepted in the beloved." Eph. i. 6. "Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation." Isaiah xlv. 17. "Surely shall one say, in the Lord I have righteousness and strength: in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." ver. 24, 25. "This is the name wherewith he shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness." Jer. xxxiii. 16. "This is the name wherewith he shall be called the Lord our Righteousness." chap. xxiii. 6. "To them who are sanctified in Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. i. 2. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, he that glorifieth, let him glory in the Lord." ver. 30. "They shall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us." Matt. i. 23. Time would fail me, to mention all the scriptures which I apprehend are full of this matter; and *are*, as I conceive, incapable of any *consistent* explication, that takes not in the *union* subsisting between *Christ* and his *Church*. If what I have already said, hath the weight, which it appears to me to have; then, without *union* with *Christ* all our hopes and expectations by *him* are groundless, and without the least shadow of reason: what I have said before, when proving the inconsistency and unreasonableness of his suffering for sin, without *union* to the sinner, is of equal force to prove this assertion, as I am persuaded, that all the ways of God with *man* are founded in equity.

Though I might offer many more reasons showing the necessity of this *union*, yet at present I shall forbear; judging the hints already given, sufficient to the purpose. I shall therefore hasten to consider its nature, attempting in my measure an explication thereof according to truth.

In speaking of the nature of *union*, as subsisting between *Christ* and his *Church*, I might have recourse to numerous similitudes which the scriptures afford; and which the *Holy Ghost* makes use of to that purpose; but shall confine myself to a few only, and those, such as show the matter with more ease and familiarity.

The apostle shows us *Adam*, as a figure of him who was to come. Rom. v. 14. I would therefore consider wherein this divine grace was shadowed forth in *Adam*: *Moses* tells us that when God created *Man*, male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name *Adam*, in the day when they were created. Gen. v. ii. Thus were the *twain* created in *one*: the *Woman* in her *Husband*, where they had *one* name given them: he called their name *Adam*: It was whilst they were in *this* condition, that the Lord God breathed into their nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. It was whilst they were in *this* capacity, undistinguished in person, that the Lord God commanded man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 16, 17. It was whilst the *twain* thus existed in *one*, that the Lord God brought all the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air unto *Adam*, to see what he would call them, that he might at once, give a specimen of his wisdom, in making their names explanatory of their nature; and also by this act be instated in that dominion over the creatures, which the Lord God had given him. Yea, it was whilst the person of *Adam* was *plural*, as containing the woman, in himself, that the Lord God said unto them "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it," &c., and when the Lord God afterwards (causing a deep sleep to fall upon *Adam*, and taking the rib from his side, of which he made the woman) brought her unto him, *Adam* said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Gen. ii. 21. Thus, her existing in a distinct personality, did not hinder her *union* to the man, for when *Adam* saw her, he said this is *now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*, as truly so *now*, as when she only existed a rib in my side. The *twain* were created in *one*, the woman in her husband: similar with *this*, the *Church* existed in *Christ*; "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Eph. i. 4. "Having this purpose and grace, given us in him, before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. The *man* and woman, under this consideration, had but *one* name: he called their name *Adam*. So *Christ* and his *Church*, in this *union* bears *one* name, *both* are called the Lord our righteousness. *He*, Jer. xxiii. 6. and *She*, chap. xxxiii. 16. *We* the righteousness of God in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. The Lord God covenanting with *Adam* as the *head* of the earthly creation, as having the woman in himself, drew a figure of his covenant with *Christ*, as having the *Church* existing in *him*; *he* as the *head* engaging for his *members*; as the *husband* for his *wife*,

as the *King* for his *subjects*, as the *root* for his *branches*, *&c.* Which covenant was afterwards confirmed of God in *Christ*, when he sware unto *Abram*, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The promises made unto *him*, are all yea, and amen, in *him*, 2 Cor. i. 20. In *him* declared, in *him* fulfilled upon all his members. *Adam* having the *Woman* in himself, manifesting his wisdom in naming the creatures, and withal his dominion over them, was the wisdom of his *wife*; and her honourable exaltation in point of dominion: so *Jesus* having the *Church* in himself, in all the displays of his wisdom, is the wisdom of the *Church*. 1 Cor. i. 30. Likewise *his* dominion, where all things are put under *his* feet, is the exalted grace and glory, which was promised the *Church*. Psalm viii. compared with Heb. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. *Eve* when taken from *Adam* into a distinct consciousness of existence, was not less related unto him, than when she was only a rib in his side, as appears from *Adam's* testimony, she is *now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*: In like manner, the *Church* when put forth in the creation of *Adam*, into a distinct personality from her *head* and *husband Christ*, was not less *united* unto him, than when she only existed in him; which she did, before the earthy man was created, or ever the worlds were made: as is manifest from the apostle, who tells us, that he speaks of *Christ* and his *Church*, where he says that they *twain shall be one flesh*. Eph. v. 32. "Members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, (verse 30,) one spirit (Cor. vi. 7.) with him their own Lord and husband: After this manner, (according to my apprehension) did the beginning of the creation of God preach Jesus: and the union of *Adam* and his *spouse* represent that of *Christ* and his *Church*.

The next thing I shall attempt an explanation of this divine *union* by, is the *fall* of *Adam*, and of the world in him; for *this* also abounds with instruction, with positive and intelligible figures of the *Lamb* and his *wife*. The apostle tells us, that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." 1 Tim. ii. 14. "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord." Cor. xi. 11. From hence we gather, that *Adam* was not deceived in his own person; but knowing what *Eve* had done, and seeing their ruin inevitable, he voluntarily put himself into her condition, by receiving the fruit from her hand, and eating thereof: such was his love unto his wife. And as they were not, (though distinct in person) without each other in the Lord, *her* transgression extended unto *him*; and his *union* unto *her*, made it equitable, for the curse and condemnation of *her* folly, to fall upon *him*; and that without the consideration of *his* consent and compliance with *her*.

In like manner, *Christ* the *husband* was not deceived: but his *wife*, the *Church*, being deceived, was in the transgression. Yet as the *union* was such, that *Christ* was not without the *Church*, nor the *Church* without *him* at any time; it was equitable for *her* curse and condemnation to fall upon *him*. Withal, such was his love unto his *spouse*, that he voluntarily put himself in her condition, when he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, tempted in every point like her, that he might compassionate her ignorance and wanderings, and be touched with a feeling of her infirmities. Moreover, the scriptures affirm, that "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation." Rom. v. 8. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. iii. 23. It is evident hence, that in *Adam's* offence, all offended: which supposes such an *union* between *Adam* and his *offspring*, that *his* sin was *their* sin; and *his* ruin *their* ruin; thus by *his* offence, were *they* made sinners; whilst *they* included in *him* were in passivity, and *he* the active consciousness of the whole. And, that his sin hath reached the ends of the earth, hath corrupted the whole mass of mankind, both the scriptures and common experience, (from the visible effects thereof daily produced in every man) abundantly declare. If it be granted, that there was such a *union* between *Adam* and his *offspring*, as rendered his sin theirs, why should it be thought a thing incredible, that the like *union*, subsisting between *Jesus* and *his* seed, renders his condition theirs? especially as the apostle hath stated the matter thus: "As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Rom. v. 19. The scriptures here shewing the method of *sin* in *Adam*, and of *grace* in *Christ*, takes an occasion to illustrate the *latter* by the *former*: intimating, that as *sin* came upon all *Adam's* posterity by *his* single act; before *they* had any capacity of sinning, after the similitude of *his* transgression; or of personal concurrence with *him* in his iniquity: it must have been from such a *union* to *him*, such an inclusion of the whole in *him*, as rendering *his* condition theirs in whatever state he was: hence, *his* sin, its curse and fruit, was *their's*, before they felt it, knew it, or ever were conscious of existence. Thus by *one man's* disobedience, *many* were made sinners. In like manner, *Christ's* righteousness is upon all *his* seed: by *his* single act, before *they* had any capacity of obeying, after the similitude of *his* obedience; or of assenting to what *he* did, or suffered: this manifests such an *union* to *him*, such an inclusion of the whole seed in *him*, as renders *his* condition *theirs*, in every state which he passes through; insomuch, that *his* righteousness, with all the blessings and fruits thereof, is *theirs*; before they have known it, believed it, or ever were conscious of existence. Thus by the obedience of *one* are *many* made righteous.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. xv. 22. (Besides proving the general resurrection) the apostle explains in those words, the matter whereof I am treating. As all died, and

were lost in *Adam*, when *he* was caught in toils of sin and death, it is evident *they* were then united in *him*, then *united* to *him*, so that *his* sin was *their* sin; *his* death, *their* death. As in *Adam* so in *Christ*, *united* in *him*, in all *he* did, and suffered; saved in *him*, crucified with *him*, risen with *him*, ascended and seated with *him*, in heavenly places, &c. Why may not our salvation in *Christ* from *union* with *him*, in *his* obedience, and death, be judged as reasonable as our condemnation in *Adam*, from *union* with *him*, in *his* sin and misery? I acknowledge the *latter* is more familiar, when *I would do good evil is present with me:* whilst the *former* is more remote from our senses, and only manifest, when "we look not to the things which are not seen but to the things which are seen." But, if laying sensible things aside, as that which is temporary, we attend wholly to the testimony of the scriptures; having the anointed to guide us, we shall enter into truth, and spiritual things will be manifest. I would now proceed to consider *Aaron* clothed with the garment of his priesthood, as a figure of *Christ*, and his *Church united*. It may not be denied that *Aaron* was a type of *Christ;* neither as I conceive, that the garment was a figure of the *Church*, as attending circumstances sufficiently prove. The different colours and materials, in the garment, denote the many nations, languages, kindreds, and tongues, gathered into the body of the Lamb: where Jew and Gentile are reconciled, and both made one. *Aaron's* garment was so contrived, that he should bear the names of the people upon his shoulders, engraven upon the stones of memorial: his bearing them on his shoulders signifies his carrying their names, persons, and burdens, through the whole of what he officiated in. This answers well to *Jesus*, who says of his Church, "He bare them, and carried them all the days of old." Isa. lxiii. 9. The names of the people were also engraven upon the breast-plate of judgment, which (*Aaron* bearing them on his heart) implied his tender concern, and care for their welfare. And, how carefully concerned *Jesus* is, for the welfare of the people, let his humbled and sorrowful life, his sharp, dolorous sufferings, his shameful and bloody death upon the accursed tree, bear witness. And, that their names were engraven on precious stones, denotes first, the value of them, since the most valuable of gems were appointed to receive the engraving. The everlasting durableness of their names was hinted here also, where such stones were ordained to bear them, whose nature admits not of their being erased. This also leads to *Jesus*, who says, "Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Isa. xlix. 6. *Aaron* could not be cosecrated until he had the garment on him. Neither could *Jesus* officiate as the High-Priest and Saviour of the people, without taking upon him the seed of *Abraham*. Heb. ii. 16. It being necessary that he as an high-priest, should have somewhat to offer. When *Aaron* had his garment on him, he was anointed, and not before: it was then the precious ointment was poured on his head, and running down his beard, reached the hem of his garment. Concerning which oil, the Lord saith, "upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it, it is holy: and it shall be holy unto you: whosoever compounded any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people." Exod. xxx. 32, 33. May it not be determined, that this oil, answers to the unction which is from the holy one; the anointing which guides us into all truth: that "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Tit. iii, 5, 6. *Jesus* when anointed with the *holy ghost*, and with *power*, was clothed with the people; they being anointed in him. "Behold how pleasant a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity; it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirt of his garment." Psal. cxxxii. 1, 2. The composition like unto this, forbidden by the Lord, is a compound of such virtues, amiable qualities, gracious dispositions, &c. as are thought to abound in man: and when distinct from the consideration of *Union* with *Christ*, and of being anointed in *him*, men profess themselves anointed with the *holy ghost* and with *power*, imputing every change of sentiment, and behaviour, to the immediate influence of the divine spirit: and thus judging of spiritual things, by their own passions, and fleshly reformations, they may be said to pour the oil upon the flesh of man; yea, upon the stranger, contrary to the divine institution.

Aaron was to have his garment on when he ministered in holy things, nor was he to enter into the holy place without it, lest he died; and it was to be unto him for glory and for beauty. A true representation of *Jesus*, clothed with the people; when by himself he purged our sin, offering himself up unto God, through the eternal spirit; having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And, as by *union* to *him*, they were crucified with *him*, so also being risen with *him*, *he* entered not into the holy place without *them:* but like *Aaron* he entered, wearing the people into the immediate presence of God: and there presenting *himself*, said, *behold I, and the children whom God hath given me.* For, when *Aaron* entered into the holy place, with blood in his hand, (the names of the people sparkling upon his breast-plate, before the face of God,) the blood which he then offered, was respected in justice, as the very blood of the offending people; whose names being engraven on the garment were there present, and sparkling, were seen in the blood, by divine justice: there rendering a reason of their expectations from the mercy seat. On this account, was the breast-plate called the breast-plate of judgment; because, by what was there represented, it is evident that mercy was expected

in a way of judgment; that the song might be of mercy and judgment. The very same *union* (with as much more reality, as the substance hath above the shadow) is there between the sufferings and blood of *Jesus*, and the people: That blood, and wounded form, with which he entered into the holiest of all, and in which he still appears as a lamb who hath been slain, relates so truly to the seed of *Abraham*, whom he took upon him as a garment, who were contained in his body as members thereof, of his flesh, and of his bones, as to be in justice, respected as their own blood, shed for their sins: and a sufficient reason rendered, of their faith *in*, and their hopes *from* the mercy seat. "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. ix. 22. Int. the breast-plate of judgment, *Moses* put the *Urim* and *Thummim*, the *Lights* and *Perfections*; whereby a free intercourse was opened, between God and man: This was a true representation of divine wisdom and purity; of God manifest in the flesh, dwelling in the midst of the people, Psal. cxxxii. 14. "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Thus the *Urim* and *Thummim* was a figure of the *Godhead*, *Aaron of Christ*, and his garment of the people; these three agreeing together in one; as where *Jesus* speaking to the Father, saith, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, John xvii. 23, at that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you." John xiv. 20. *Aaron's* garment was to be unto him for glory, and for beauty: so also was the *Church* to be unto *Jesus*, "all things were made for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist," Coll. i. 16, 17. and "He is the appointed heir of all things." Heb. i. 2. His being *before all things*, implies, that his honour, and glory, was what the Father had first, and principally in his view, when the decree went forth for the creation of man: whilst all his permissions concerning man, and all his immediate dealings with him, are rendered, in infinite wisdom, subservient to this view. And indeed, upon this foundation, where he hath made all things for the glory of his Son, and hath put all things in subjection under him, decreeing him the homage and worship of every knee; with a full acknowledgment of his being Lord: I say, upon this foundation, hath the Father established his own glory, and praise. As appears from Phil. ii. 9. 10, 12. *All things were made for him*, that as a *Son*, he might have an *inheritance*, as a king, he might have a *kingdom*, as a *bridegroom*, he might have a *bride*, and as a *head*, he might have a *body* consisting of many members. And, that he might be the Saviour of that body, was man created in a mutable state. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope," Rom. viii. 20. That the creature being deceived through sin, and lost in the bondage of corruption, *Jesus* might have an opportunity of exerting his grace, his wisdom, power and love, in the redemption of their soul by his blood; and in saving them in himself, with an everlasting salvation. This being the means of his obtaining that everlasting name, glory, honour, immortality, and eternal renown, which had been decreed and promised him, "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name." Phil. ii. 8, 9. God having, in the riches of his wisdom and love, so inseparably connected man's happiness with the glory of his son, that each is included in the other: and here are the people the glory of *Christ*, as the priestly garment was the glory of *Aaron*. "For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me, the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory," Jer. xiii. 11. "out of Zion the perfection of beauty God hath shined." Psal. l. 2. And as beauty consists in a perfect body, where none of the members are lacking, nor any thing superfluous: bearing withal a just proportion in every part, so is the *Church* the beauty of *Jesus* as the fulness of him who filleth all in all. Eph. i. 33. "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Psal. cxxxix. 15, 16. Time would fail me to mention all the particulars of this mysterious garment: as those also of sundry other mysteries in the *Jewish* Church, which I apprehend were instituted as positive figures of that blessed *union* subsisting between *Christ* and his *Church*.

I might go on, to use similitudes drawn from Moses and the prophets, as a farther explication of this matter, tending also to prove and confirm it: for such was the manner of the holy ghost's speaking unto the Fathers, under the Old Testament. But as all who profess Jesus Christ, understand not the scriptures, nor the power of God, it is probable that this method may be objected unto, and the matter treated by many as fables of Allegory. I would therefore consider what the New Testament says thereof, as using greater plainness of speech, and by all the literals acknowledged, as speaking more to the purpose.

Our Saviour teacheth us the grace of union under the similitude of a vine and its branches: I am the the vine, ye are the branches. John xv. 5. Where our Saviour takes on him this appellative, the vine, he is to be understood as speaking of himself according to his human nature, hence he is called the plant of renown, Ezek. xxxiv. 29. The plant which the heavenly Father hath planted: Mat. xv. 13, wherein his husbandry appears. When the the stock or set is first planted, there are no

branches thereon: but nevertheless, the husbandman knowing its seed to be in itself, planteth in hope; being well assured of its putting forth its branches, and bearing fruit thereon in due season: All his skill, care and sufficiency, standing engaged for the same.

Thus Jesus, when first planted by the Father's hand, as the first, and only begotten, chosen and beloved, was as the stock or set, whose branches doth appear; but having then his seed in himself, he was to put them forth as his *branches* in due season; according to the appointment and foreknowledge of the great Husbandman: his wisdom, power, care, and all-sufficiency, standing engaged for the same. As the *stem* and *branches* make one tree; so *Jesus* and the people make one body, one man, one *Christ*, one elect, one beloved of the Father, one crucified, raised, and ever-living, the *stock* and *branches*, making one tree, grow in one soil; so *Christ* and the people are jointly rooted, and grounded in the Father's love: "And hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John xvii. 23. "Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." Rom. viii. 17. Standing with *him* in the same relation to the Divine Majesty; "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." John xx. 17. The root and branches, making one tree, have but one and the same life, sap, and fruitfulness. So *Christ* and the people, have both one, and the same eternal life: "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." 1 John. v. 11. Therefore the Saviour saith, "Because I live, ye shall live also." John xiv. 19. They have also the same fruit, for the fruit is not of the branches distinct from the stem, nor of the stem, without the branches: but of the tree, consisting of stem and branches. So also is *Christ*, who says, "from me is thy fruit found." Hosea xiv. 9. In brief, if Jesus meant to teach us the *union* subsisting between himself and his *Church*, under the similitude of the *vine* and its branches, which he certainly did; *then*, whatsoever *can* be said of the oneness of the tree, consisting of stock and branches, as a figure: *can* with *much* more propriety be said of *Christ*, and the people united, as the thing signified. The date of that *union* which the branches hath to the stem, is equal to their existence: yea, as considered in the stock, the *union* which made them one therewith, was before they had any apparent existence. And, though the vine stock in *itself* may have the most fruitful qualities; yet it cannot exhibit the same, by bringing forth fruit to perfection, except it first put forth its proper branches: therefore the existence of the branches, yea, the *union* thereof to the stem, and their life therein, is *before*, yea, necessarily *antecedent* to all their fruitful productions. So also is *Christ*; our *union* to him bearing a superior date to our apparent personal existence. Therefore, said to be *chosen in him*. Eph. i. 4. And to have "grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. And though Jesus as the root and stem, was possessed of qualities infinitely fruitful; yet there was neither possibility nor occasion of his exhibiting this by bringing forth his fruit; except his people or proper branches, are first put forth: accordingly they were put forth in *Adam* to a personal existence; and sin entering, his bringing forth fruit was possible, and an opportunity administered him, of signalizing himself in so doing: for, as the *union* of the branch to the stem, is not lessened by sprouting into an apparent existence, but is as full as when they were hidden in the stock; neither was the *Church* or members of *Christ*, less united unto him, when put forth in *Adam*, than what they were, when only existing in him; being still his true and proper branches. But, smitten with mildew, and blasting, in *Adam's* offence, their life, sap and fruitfulness, was repelled and driven back to the root; until the Great Husbandman in infinite wisdom, so manured and dressed the root, that forcing the life and sap upwards, the branches were passive unto its influence, until all its fruit appeared. In order to their fruitfulness, the branches were purged in the vine: there the superfluities of the whole were cut off, and all necessary for their perpetual fruitfulness accomplished. In like manner, the *Church* included in *Christ*, were purged in *him*, in order to *their* fruitfulness. "In putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." Col. ii. 11. When he had by himself purged our sins. Heb. i. 3. "Being now justified by his blood." Rom. v. 9. And "sanctified through the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Hev. x. 10. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Heb. xiii. 12. The vine thus purged, brings forth its fruit upon the native branches; having no other medium of bringing it forth. Thus *Christ* brought forth all the fruit of his pure conception, his spotless birth, his circumcision, and holy life, his bloody, shameful, and terrible death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, upon the people, as the branches. Having taken on him the seed of *Abraham*, *he* in *them*, and *they* in *him*, fulfilled all righteousness, obeyed the law, and endured the penalty for the past transgression, being thus made perfect in one. And because, through all this, the people were in passivity, and *Christ* the active consciousness, and quickening spirit of the whole, therefore, saith the prophet, "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us." Isaiah xxvi. 12. "From me is thy fruit found." Hosea xiv. 8.

Again, the apostle treats of this glorious grace of *union*, under the figure of the oneness and harmony of many members in one body. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that

one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." Cor. xii. 12. The complete body here spoken of, is similar to *Christ*, and the members which fill up this body, to the people. Take away the members, and there will remain no body; take a *few*, yea, *one only* away, and the body is not perfect; deny the proportionable perfection of any one of these members, and then the symmetry of the body is destroyed. So also is *Christ;* take away the people, or deny that they were united to their head *Jesus* at some certain time, then was there at that time no *Christ:* or, if all the *Church* were not united to him, but some particular member, or members, stood at any time unrelated unto him; then was he not a *perfect Christ* at that time: or, if it be possible that a bone of that body should be broken, or a member cut off, then may he yet be rendered an imperfect *Christ:* and withal a deficiency in his power will appear, because, no man hateth his own flesh: but naturally cares for it, loves and cherisheth it: or, if this *Church*, as united to *Christ*, is not perfect according to the perfection of beauty, in righteousness, holiness, wisdom, &c. then is *Christ* deficient in those particulars: which to affirm, will be agreed upon by all his worshippers, to be blasphemy. From hence we may infer, that whatever *Jesus was*, whatever he *did*, *suffered*, or *now is*, under the character of *Christ*, the people, as the *fulness of him that filleth all in all*, are not excluded; but to be considered *with him*, and *in him*, in the same circumstances and condition, through every dispensation. "Jesus is head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. i. 22, 23. This leads us to the consideration of the human body as the intelligible figure of this sublimity, our *union* with *Christ*. The *head* and *members* are one in conception: this represents the people's *oneness* with *Christ*, as the object of the Father's love. "Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John xvii. 23. As the *head* and *members* are born at once; so *Christ* and his *Church*, were *united* in *his* birth: as pure, and free from the original taint. And also in his glorious resurrection, as born from the dead. As the *head* and *members* in one body, are nourished by the same food, so *Christ* and the *Church* live by the same grace, good will and eternal love of the Father. As the *head* and *members* in one body, have but one life, so *Christ* and his *Church* have but one eternal life, one life unto God, our eternal life is in Christ. John. v. 11. "Because I live ye shall live also." John xiv. 19. This is the word of the Lord. Again, from the harmony of the body, the *head* and *members* have but one condition: they mourn together, and rejoice together; so also is *Christ:* we were planted together with *him*, in the likeness of *his* death, and are also with him in the likeness of *his* resurrection. As the harmony of the body prevents all schism therein, so that the *head* saith not unto the *feet*, I have no need of you: neither is there any separate interest in Christ; nor will he say unto the people, I have no need of you: nor will the feet, though thus acknowledged, boast themselves against the head, usurp its dignity, and say I have no need of thee: but will confess, and reverence it as pre-eminent as the seat of wisdom, by which the economy of the whole is preserved: so also is Christ, made of God unto us wisdom. 1 Cor. i. 30. As the *head* is the source of light to the body, the wise man's eyes being in his head, Eccl. ii. 14; so also is *Christ the light of the world*, John viii 12. The head is the seat of reason to the body, by which it is directed, and influenced to shun all dangers, to refuse the evil, and choose the good; it is the disorder of the *head* only, that can deprive the body of this: if the *head* is free, the hurt of any other member cannot spoil the economy of the body; so also is *Christ*, he as the *head* is our divine reason and influence; as for the people, the Lord saith of them, "it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps." Jer. x. 23. *Christ* as our *head* is above all distress, cannot be disordered; therefore the harmony and economy of his body cannot be spoiled, which makes us sing,

Christ's our head, gone up on high,
And we his body are;
All our fears before him fly,
Our each distracting care.
Though we Satan's dart should feel,
His power can never strike us dead,
He may bruise us on the heel,
But cannot reach our head.

Again, the increase and nourishment of the body, is by *union* with the head, "from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together increaseth with the increase of God." Col. ii. 19. The *head* first receives the food, relishes and prepares it for the whole body: so also is *Christ;* as the *head* he first received the grace, it being given us in him before the world began: as the *head* he tasted for us, not death only, which he tasted for every man; but life and immortality, which he entered into, and relished in our name, and nature, as the *head* for the body. He, as our *head*, prepared our food for us, which he did, by fulfilling the condition, and enduring the penalty, that we might inherit the promise: our *union* to him, making *his* condition *ours*, we are nourished by him. As the *head*, though the most exalted and comely part, is yet a member of the body; it hath a right to suffer for the other members the chastisement of their peace: so also is *Christ*, when they smote the judge of Israel upon the cheek with a rod, it was the iniquity of his heels which compassed him about: the chastisement of *their* peace which he bare, and their iniquities which were laid upon him. They having wandered into forbidden paths, had the punishment of their wanderings inflicted upon their head; it was the sacrilege, blood, and oppression of the hands, that was visited upon the head, when Jehovah's flaming sword awaked against the man who was his fellow. The union and har-

mony of the body renders it equitable to punish and chastise the whole body in one member, for its offence in another: because, if "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." 1 Cor. xii. 26. As the union of the body makes it equitable to punish the *head* for the offence of the other members; with like equity doth the members participate with the head in all its honours and glory. Thus the crowning of the head, crowns the whole man; and every member partakes of the honour.

The precious ointment poured upon the head, runs down to the hem, the whole man; yea, every member is anointed in the anointing of the head, by the laying on the hands upon the head only, the blessing was conferred on the *whole man*. Thus whether "one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it," 1 Cor. xii. 26; so also is *Christ;* is he crowned with glory and honour? Behold he saith in his appeal to the Father, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." John xvii. 22. Our head Christ first, as having the pre-eminence, is *immediately united* to the Father; and we by him. *He* is *immediately* the Son of God, and we have the adoption of children by him. Eph. i. 4. He is the *immediate* object of the Father's love, but we by *union* with him, are beloved, as he is beloved. John xvii. 23. He is the first elect, *immediately* the chosen of God but we by *union* with him were chosen in him before the foundation of the world. Eph. i. 4.

Thus considering him, as the head of his body the Church, we give him the pre-eminence as *immediately* receiving all grace and glory from the Father: which honour, all the members as united to him the head, must necessarily partake of in him. Thus the union of head and members, mutually communicating their condition to each other, when rightly weighed, throws a light upon the matter; and shows us how Jesus hath from hence, the right of redemption: the justice of his bloodshedding appearing here, those where the harmony of the body, renders the punishment of one member, that of the whole man. According to the laws of *union* and *harmony*, the whole body may be considered in each member, but with greater propriety, in the more exalted, pre-eminent member the head. Accordingly, the scriptures are very explicit on this point, and speak very much of our being in Christ, chosen in him, justified in him, sanctified in him, saved in him, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him. According to this *union* or being in him as branches in the vine, as members in the body, &c. the people are considered together with him, through all the circumstances of his birth, life, death, resurrection, and glory. "She was delivered of a man-child, who hath heard such a thing, who hath seen such things, shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailled, she brought forth her children." Isaiah lxvi. 7, 8. *Christ* was certainly the *man-child* here spoken of: compared with, Rev. xii. 5. And yet, this man-child is here shown to be the children of Zion, to be a nation born at once. Hence we conclude, that the *union* between Christ and the people, is such, that they as "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," (Eph. v. 30.) were in him in his birth, that they might inherit the blessings of his holy nativity: that of Jer. xviii. 2, being here fulfilled. Man being the vessel marred between the potter's hands, was not rejected, but here was made *another* and *better* vessel; where the nature once spoiled by sin, was born into the world pure and spotless, and *called the Son of God;* and here, was that saying brought to pass, a *woman* shall compass a *man*. Under this consideration, we see Christ prepared and qualified to accomplish the work which was before him: not only as having hereby a capactiy of suffering death, by being clothed with a mortal body, and made a little lower than the angels, but having taken on him the seed of *Abraham*, Heb. ii. 16; being *made of a woman, made under the law*. He, as having the people in himself, had the right of redemption, and *as* them, stood engaged to fulfil every requisite to the glory of God, and their eternal salvation: which requisites, were *first* a holy principle, a privation of original guilt, fulfilled in his birth; a just observance of the law, and conformity to the divine nature, fulfilled in his life; and a full propitiation for the sin that was past, accomplished in his sufferings and death. The whole of which, he did; as containing the people in himself, who are upon that account, not only represented as being *in him*, in his birth, as above; but also in the whole of his life, death, and resurrection. In him were they circumcised, and the body of the sins of their flesh, put off by the circumcision of *Christ*." Col. ii. 11. In him fulfilling the law, and walking in all the ordinances of God blameless. Crucified with him, Gall. ii. 20; and that the resurrection of Christ was the resurrection of the people, from death, as the wages of sin, the Holy Ghost testifies by the prophets, Isaiah xxvi. 19: "Thy dead shall live, my dead body shall they arise." And, Hosea vi. 2. "After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us, and we shall live in his sight." And by the apostle, as Eph. ii. 5, 6; "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." From hence it is evident that the *union* between Christ, and the people, was such (as head and members in one body) that they were *with him*, and *in him*, in his birth, his life, his death, resurrection and glory. Therefore his sufferings, wars, and triumphs, all are theirs; and they have a right from this to rejoice in him; in what *he has done*, in what *he is*, and in the acceptance he hath found with the Father; and that, over all the weakness and vanity they perceive in themselves.

Again, the *union* of Christ and his Church is taught from the similitude of a building; of which Christ is both the foundation, and the top-stone: as appears from Isaiah xxviii 16; "Behold I lay in Zion for a foun-

dation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone." And, Luke xx. 17; "The stone which the builders refused, the same is become the head of the corner." As the whole building is locked in, and enclosed, between the foundation-stone, and the head-stone: so also is Christ. He is the *Alpha* and *Omega*. The building was begun, and finished in him. He is the foundation of our election, grace, and sonship; we having all by *union* with him: and the whole is supported by him; so is he, as the author and finisher of our salvation, as made wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification unto us, the head of the corner; our *first* and *last*, our security in eternity and time. "In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. ii. 22. We consider Christ appointed the Saviour of man in the eternal decree, as the foundation laid; and in his incarnation, holy birth, and life of righteousness, as the building rising; until through his sufferings, death, resurrection, justification in the spirit, and reception in glory, the building was finished; and the head-stone brought forth with shoutings, crying grace, grace, unto it. The people as chosen in Christ, had this grace given them, that Jew and Gentile should be builded together in him, until they were found a meet habitation of God through the Spirit. The foundation and corner-stone, with the middle stones, make one building: so Christ and the people make *one* house, where God delights to dwell: *one* temple, the glory of which as the latter, is greater than that of the former. Here God walks in the midst of the people, as he hath promised; because his dwelling in Christ, is his dwelling in *them*. To come up to the faith and understanding of this, in the Spirit is the substance of that shadow, where the tribes of Israel, at a certain age, came up from every quarter of the land, to the temple at Jerusalem, to worship. Again, the union of Christ and his Church is represented under the figure of a man and his wife: "For this cause shall a man leave his father, and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh: this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his Church." Eph. v. 31, 32.

These words of the apostle, are a quotation from Gen. ii. 23, 24, where Adam on the first sight of his Eve, declares the union subsisting between them. It is evident from his words, that this relation did not consist in that matrimonial connexion, which commenced, when by mutual consent and covenant, they cohabited and possessed each other: but was dependent on something prior to this. The source of their union, and kindred relation, was their being *one* in the love of the Father; where they were undistinguished in sex, &c. their being neither male nor female, in Christ Jesus, in whom they were loved, and chosen, before the world began. And yet the man was not without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord. This source, had its first opening in their concreation, in one body, and human intelligence: which body, and intelligence was male though not without including the female: but the latter, according to the distinction of sex and personal existence, was, as being in the male in a state of passivity, and the male, the active consciousness of the twain in one. Adam, considering his perfection in knowledge, could not be ignorant of this, his true state; and therefore expecting the woman to be distinguished in person and sex, as a manifestation to his senses, of the truth of her being, and union unto him; he knew her when the Lord God brought her unto him; and though there was a deep sleep upon him, when she was built from his side, yet when he saw her, he said, she was flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; alluding unto the *former* truth, and not unto any thing which was to follow. For they were not made more one flesh, by that mutual, matrimonial embrace which followed, than they were before: the latter, as a fruit in consequence, being only declarative of the original truth, always apparent to God, and in itself, with him, perfect and permanent.

Thus the matrimonial bond of union was with them a consequence, and fruit of an antecedent union and kindred. This also is more manifest where Abraham, when he was old, caused his servant to swear by the Lord God of heaven and earth, that he would not take a wife to his son of the daughters of the land: but that he would take him a wife of his kindred: such also was Isaac's injunction to Jacob. In this particular also, Esau offended; by marrying the daughters of Heth, where there was no union or kindred previous to the marriage. From all which, it appears that Adam's speech to Eve, was grounded upon that kindred union which subsisted between them before their marriage.

When the apostle had said, that a man and his wife should be one flesh; he immediately adds, *this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his Church*. From whence we may observe, that the *Union* of *Adam* and *Eve*, of which I have already spoken, was truly a figure of *Christ* and his *Church*: And again, that this figure, though close and pertinent, is but a figure; an imperfect representation of the matter, which made the apostle turn from the fleshly marriage, and say it is a great mystery; and pointing to the Union of Christ and the people, as the grand truth or thing signified, say, *but I speak concerning Christ and the Church*. The union and kindred relation of Adam and Eve, and of the patriarchs and their wives, previous to their marriage (the latter being subsequent to the former, and a positive proof thereof) according to the primitive law: The earthly things being a pattern of the heavenly, represents the *oneness of Christ* and the *Church*. Their marriage as a figure, shews our believing or closing with Christ by faith: And that *union* and kindred, which subsisted between them before marriage was a shadow of the *union* between Christ and his Church, before the Church is brought to the knowledge of her husband, by believing, or ere they are married unto him, who is risen from the dead. But, as marriage is the consummate end of *union*, it is to be

considered as explanatory of the blessings contained therein; it shews the *woman* under her *husband's* name, in a joint possession, and enjoyment with him, of his state and condition. As one flesh, they cannot be insensible of each other's state, but must mutually feel pain, ease, hunger, thirst, joy, sorrow, happiness, and unhappiness; cannot possibly hate each other, because no man hateth his own flesh. As one flesh they have but one interest, one aim, and end, are not twain in any condition, but constantly one in all things. If this idea of marriage is true, it is easily perceived that it is only true in Christ. Previous to our marriage by faith with him who is risen from the dead, there is a discovery made of his person, of his being our kinsman redeemer, of his right to demand us: hence it appears wrong to refuse him, nor are we under the *compulsion* of that divine right which he hath to us, only; but he also shews us his glory, his personal beauties, his suitableness to our wants, and this he doth, until our *reason* is convinced, our objections silenced, and the full consent of all our powers gained, to be his; to bear his name, to commit ourselves fully to him, with all our concerns; until we cease from care, contented and rejoiced that he should clothe us, feed us, instruct us, protect, nourish, guide and preserve us unto everlasting life. The conscience judging of Christ (thus revealing himself) that he is pure, accepted of God and lovely, discerning withal the right of appropriation (from *Union* and relation unto him) joins itself in affinity unto him; yea, puts him on, wrapping itself in him; and thus standing in his state and condition, it is purged from all guiltiness; and retaining no consciousness of evil, it is holily bold towards God, having "the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. iii. 21, "because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins," Heb. x. 2. "made perfect as pertaining to the conscience." Heb. ix. 9. And that the church as married unto Christ, is under his name, appears from, Jer. xxxiii. 16, where *she* is called the "Lord our righteousness," and from Rev. iii. 12, "I will write upon him my new name." And that *she* is a joint possessor with him, the apostle bears witness, *If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* Rom. viii. 17. And, that his state and condition is upon us, John testifies, saying, "*because as he is, so are we in this world.*" John iv. 17. And, that being one flesh, the husband cannot be insensible of our state, but must have a fellow-feeling with us, and that in the tenderest manner, in honour unto himself, and in love unto us, is evident from the Scriptures, "we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, "Heb. iv. 15, "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," Heb. v. 2, "for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." Zec. ii. 8. "In as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Mat. xxv. 40. And that no man hateth his own flesh, when spoken of the marriage *union*, hath its truth, and perfection in *Christ*, for he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5, though a woman should cease to have compassion, on the son of her womb, "yet will I not forget thee," Isaiah xlix. 5. "so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee, for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah liv. 9, 10. Thus marriage, consisting of love, and *union* as the first; the espousal, or contract as the second; the consummation, with all the attendant blessings to the bride, with glory and honour to the bridegroom, as the third; represents the *union* of *Christ* and the *Church;* The first, answering as similar to that ancient kindred *union* subsisting between them wherein he always loved her; the second, being a figure of his being made flesh, where he betrothed us unto himself; and the third, of the knowledge, and enjoyment, we have of our lovely bridegroom by faith; when believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. When we enter into the joy of our Lord, according to the conscience; his whole state, yea, all the blessings of his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, is apprehended, claimed, and possessed, by us as our own proper inheritance. I might yet go on attempting to explain the nature of this *union*, the scriptures being very full of it: But as what I have already said, may probably be as much to the purpose, as any future hint, should I say much more; and intending at first setting out, to study brevity as much as possible: I shall leave what I have written on the nature of *union*, unto the reader's consideration; and hasten to treat of its antiquity, unchangeableness, &c. according to my first proposal.

Union between *Christ* and the *Church*, is a matter universally acknowledged; where that deference, which is justly due to the scriptures, is paid: though, it is a subject very rarely treated of: Which silence concerning it, implies, either a general ignorance of the nature thereof, or, that it is respected as a matter, neither conducive to the glory of God, nor the happiness of mankind: and therefore not necessary to be taught. And where the nature thereof is in some measure known amongst men, and the utility of the doctrine allowed, they are much divided about its antiquity; before our believing, or faith in Christ, say some: Whilst others with as much strenuousness assert the contrary. But, if what I have already offered to the consideration of the public, shall be allowed to have any weight, or argumentative force; it will appear, that our *union* with *Christ* is not only antecedent to our faith, and believing, but also to all that *he* did, and suffered, for us men and for our salvation. The matter proposed in the gospel to be believed is true: and relates to the person of Christ and his benefits. That he was the Son of God, the Christ, the true *Messiah*, the *I am*, is a matter proposed to be believed, upon the credit of the divine testimony: Be-

cause this is a truth, therefore it is to be believed, and as it is a truth before believing; it is evident that it is not made a truth by believing; but is in itself a truth, perfect, and permanent, whether believed or not.

So also with relation unto his benefits, that the Father is well pleased in the beloved Son, is a truth; to be believed: and not to be made a truth, by believing. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins, return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." Isa. xliv. 22. This positive testimony of redemption, and the forgiveness of sins, is declared unto them who believed not; upon the credit of which truth, they are called upon to return unto their God. "Cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned." Isa. xl. 2. This was a truth concerning those who knew it not, and was to be declared unto them as such, that they believing it, might be comforted. That he hath "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, is true; and therefore recorded to be credited, and rejoiced in. And, if it appear that the gospel is true before our believing, then *union* with *Christ* before *faith* is true; The latter being necessary to the truth of the former; as I have sufficiently shewn under the first proposition in this treatise; where the *necessity* of union with him, not only as previous unto our faith in him, but also unto his suffering for our sins, I think appears pretty obvious. That God loved mankind before Jesus died for them, the scriptures affirm: where they made the latter, a fruit of the former; and if God loved them before, he certainly saw them in a sinless state; for it is contrary to the holiness of his nature, to love the *unclean*, being of purer eyes than to behold iniquity: But in themselves, as related unto the earthy *Adam*, they were unclean: Therefore he must have beheld them in Christ, loved them in *him*: which if true, then were they in *him*: And, as being in him in this sense, doth not suppose their knowledge of his person, through the belief of the gospel, but a passivity with respect to them; as branches hidden in the stock, or the woman in the man; it implies the closest union, and the necessity thereof (before their believing) to render and preserve them objects worthy of the divine love and favour.

Jesus in his appeal unto the Father, says, "thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." And again; "thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." In those words, the love of the Father unto the Son, is represented as the grand Archetype of his love unto the people: The Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world; but saith the Son, thou hast loved *them*, as thou hast loved *me*. The Father loved the Son, as the brightness of his glory, and his own express image: But saith the Son, thou hast loved *them*, as thou hast loved *me*. The Father loved the Son, and preferred him before angels, having not said unto any of them, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: But saith the Son, of the children of men, thou hast loved *them* as thou hast loved *me*. The Father loves the Son with everlasting, unchangeable delight and pleasure: But saith the Son, thou hast loved *them* as thou hast loved *me*. The Father loveth the Son, and hath revealed it unto him, yea, hath given him the knowledge of it above measure: But, saith the Son, "that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." From all which it appears, that *Christ* and the *Church*, are one object of the Father's love; of his choice, good-will, delight, and pleasure. *He* the head, and *they* the body, constituting the elect precious, the Man beloved of God and accepted. But the head being the *medium*, between God, and the body, hath the pre-eminence in all things. And, as the head was never without the body, nor the body without the head in the Lord, the body hath always been by *union* with the head, entitled unto all the blessings, honours, and glories thereof. Nor doth the head withhold from the body, that glory, and honour, which he immediately receives from God, but divinely sheds it over the whole man: according unto that "washing of regeneration. and renewing of the holy ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Therefore saith the head, the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." John xvii. 22. But to be brief, what hath already been urged to prove the necessity of *union*, proves it to be also before faith; it being necessary unto the Father's loving us, as he loved his Son, yea unto his choice of us in his Son; necessary unto the engagements of Christ on man's behalf; otherwise he had not the right of redemption: necessary unto his suffering the death of the cross for us, as hath been largely shewn in the former part of this work. It is also necessary unto our believing a truth, except it appear that our faith, or believing, makes it a truth. Indeed the apostle says, "through faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God." But he doth not say that faith made the worlds So truly through faith we understand our union with Christ: yet it is not our faith that makes it

But if it is not true until our believing, and by means thereof; then doth believing make that a truth, which was not a truth, and faith creates its own object, and then embraces it This looks like the heathen idolatry, first making their gods, and then trusting in them. Or, like Milton's adventurous flight of Satan, through chaos into the new world; which he performed before the bridge was made. That this is contrary to the Scriptures, is evident from, 1 John v. 10, 11. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son, and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." The truth here proposed to be believed, is this, that God hath given to us eternal life in his Son; and that this is a truth before it is believed, is evident; otherwise it doth not appear, how our unbelief makes God a liar. Besides, to deny this truth, is to depreciate the sacrifice of Jesus; and to make it an insufficient atonement for sin; without faith and compliance on our part: Thereby making

mises made unto him, wholly dependent on the will and actions of the creature. And how fully this frustrates the grace of God, I leave unto every man who knows himself, to determine. Moreover, I take it, that where the all-sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus to put away sin, and that without any act of ours, either mental or external, is denied, it amounts to what the Scriptures call a crucifying of the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame. But to acknowledge the all-sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ to put away sin, without any act of ours; and yet to deny this a truth until believed, (viz. that he hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself) is a palpable contradiction; a position founded in prejudice and obstinacy, without the least shadow of reason; otherwise we are to consider such a confession, as containing an equivocation; and when they confess the sacrifice of Christ as having put away sin, they make it synonimous with the sorrow, hatred, fear, faith, love, joy, &c. which they feel in their own bosoms: Thereby making no account of the person and personal sufferings of Christ, they embrace a phantasm. Of this spake the Saviour, when he said, false Christs should arise and deceive many. And indeed, our modern profession of Christianity, seems to be taking large strides towards this deception; where passion, humour and pride is opposed unto the Lord that bought us. Or, will there yet be some way found out to reconcile its being a truth *before* believing, with its becoming a truth *by* believing? A proposition of this sort might suit the subtilities of Scotus and Aquinas, but the definition thereof, would be too laboured, artificial, and sophistical, for honesty and common sense. The gospel is plain, simple and unartificial, suited to the meanest capacity; and would be more universally known, was it not for that unreasonable estimate which men set on themselves, on account of their learning, wisdom, experience, &c. thence judging themselves qualified to direct the consciences of their fellow-creatures, they will not suffer them to think for themselves; nor commend them to Jesus, and the word of his grace; but always amusing them with an artificial religion, consisting of directions how to attain to faith, to sanctification, &c. and yet to consent that they can do nothing, but that the agency of the spirit is free as the wind: With resolving cases of conscience, and thereby appropriating the authority of law-givers, withal giving such definitions of saving faith, true holiness, &c. as none but schoolmen can understand: thereby puzzling the minds of people, puffing up the vain and opinionated with pride and arrogance, from a supposition of their being possessed of those excellencies; and distracting the minds of the more phlegmatic and melancholy, through the fear of their not being possessed of them. But should mankind be released from those chains, and suffered to think for themselves, how natural would it be for them to conclude when God proposes a matter in his word to be believed, that that matter is true before they have believed it. Therefore, if it is true, that Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, and that before our faith, that which was necessary unto this transaction, namely our union with him, is true also before faith. If it is not our faith or believing that makes this union, then it is an act of eternal love, the purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; the antiquity of which is obvious, nor may its date be fixed, because exceeding the limits of time. And what hath been from everlasting will be unto everlasting, the eternal sameness of the person of Jesus, being an undeniable proof of the unchangeableness of this union. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever." Who says unto the Church, "because I live, you shall live also, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. I am He who was dead, but am alive, and lives for evermore." It is easy to see, that if our union with Christ was dependent on our faith, or believing it would be changeable; except it appear that we are perfect, and unchangeable in the faith. And if by being perfect and unchangeable in the faith we understand a believing the whole with a full understanding of the mystery, of what God hath spoken by the mouth of his prophets and apostles, and that constantly, and without the least shadow of wavering; it will appear pretty plain unto such who know themselves; that mankind are very far from being infallible, and perfect in the faith. And if any would pretend unto this perfection, (as the pride of man dare do any thing) whilst the things yet appear in them, which shew the least distrust and doubtfulness of God's providence and grace; we must be excused when we declare without fear, that they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them. If the union of Christ and the Church, is dependent on her faith, and knowledge of him, then is it proportioned unto her faith, and admits of degrees, it is also subject to change, yea, may possibly be dissolved; as it is not impossible according to the Scriptures, for a person once believing, to turn from the faith. But saith the apostle, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. viii. 38, 39. And, as the apostle here doth not intend an impossibility of believers departing from the faith, or falling from grace; (having elsewhere proved this possible) he of necessity points out something, which remains a truth, should they cease to believe. And such a truth as their unbelief cannot make void, or of none effect: And that is the love of God; always embracing them in Christ Jesus, from which, the loss of their light and confidence, can never separate them; the seal of their foundation being God's knowledge of them and not their knowledge of him. From all which it appears, that the union of Christ, and his Church, hath been of old, before faith, before time: and remains to be indissolvable, and unchangeable.

I would now consider the objections gene-

rally made unto the grace of union; and endeavour to give them satisfactory answers.

The old trite objection, of its tending unto licentiousness, leads the way, saying, if union with Christ is the ground of our acceptance with God, and our security in his favour; then the doctrine of rewards and punishments, is overthrown; and man hath nothing left to stimulate him to virtue.

Answ. To work from an expectation of being rewarded, is to make it of debt; and not of grace: But the nature of the Deity is so infinitely pure; so holy, just, and true his laws; that it is impossible man should make him his debtor: Nay, it would be the highest arrogance to pretend it: The scriptures are against it, when they protest that no flesh shall glory in his presence; common experience in its sober moments is against it: for that teacheth us, that every man living is infinitely short of conformity unto the divine nature; therefore the notion of obedience from an expectation of reward, is a tacit acknowledgement of man's utter ignorance, both of himself, and his God. And then, to suppose that the fear of punishment is necessary to excite man to obedience, is to reverse the scriptures. The gospel is preached for the obedience of faith; that, being thereby delivered from fear we might serve him in holiness, and righteousness, all the days of our life.

But the obedience of fear, is diametrically opposite unto the obedience of faith: the former, hath its rise and maintenance from a lie; from that habit, and principle, which makes God a liar; by not believing the record which he hath given of his Son. But the latter springs from a belief of the truth; from a full persuasion of the love of God, and of his being reconciled in Christ Jesus. The former, is a doing evil, that good may come; for where the fear of punishment is judged necessary to obedience, unbelief is established, and authority given to crucify the Son of God afresh, and to put him to open shame, to trample his blood under foot, and count it an unholy thing; for all this is tacitly taught, in the fear of punishment as necessary unto obedience; and yet this manifest antichristian policy, is generally taught by those conscience-directors, who seek *themselves*, and not Christ Jesus the Lord. They very well know, that ignorance, unbelief, and fear, are the nerves of implicit obedience, unto their doctrines and traditions. But, that such an obedience, is far from being compensate, for the despite done thereby to the spirit of grace, and dishonour to the crucified one, they shall sooner or later know; when all their works shall be burnt up, and they shall suffer loss. But the obedience of faith is genuine, free from artifice, without fear, dependent on the perfect amity of God; yea, consists in a constant persuasion of, and rejoicing in this truth; that Jesus Christ the Son of God, died upon a cross, and rose again from the dead, having thereby justified us from every charge once brought against us; and sanctified us from all our pollutions. To submit unto this, to have the conscience purified through the view and belief of this, yea, to have every thought brought in captivity unto this, is the true obedience of faith. And, this is so far from being urged by fear, that fear would annihilate it. And so far from having an eye to the reward, that it answers unto that charity, which seeketh not its own; but says, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink, &c. Therefore, that the grace of union with Christ, and salvation in him overturneth the doctrine of rewards, and punishments, as that which influenceth our lives, is a truth: But then, it only overturns what the Scriptures explode; and what reason confesseth mean, and selfish, and not that generous disinterested service of love, which it declares worthy of the divine being, and becoming the dignity of man.

Object. But, doth not the Scriptures rather establish the doctrine of rewards, and punishments, as that which excites to choose the good, and refuse the evil? Is not this their express language, "say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings, woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him!" Isaiah iii. 10, 11. With many other texts of like import.

Answ. Unto the right understanding of the scriptures, it is necessary to know, that they consist of two parts, letter and spirit, or law and gospel; now the letter, (or the law) killeth, saith the apostle, but the spirit (or the gospel) giveth life. And as this is needful to be known, so is it also, that we should be able to distinguish one from the other; else how doth it appear that we rightly divide the word of life? If the gospel be considered, as God's good sayings, or glad tidings to mankind, we need only consider briefly the state and condition of man; and then, what may with any propriety, be called glad tidings, unto one thus circumstanced, will easily appear. Man is a fallen creature, who breaking the law of his God, incurred the penalty of eternal death: And, is so far from having ability to extricate himself, that all the imaginations, and thoughts of his heart, are continually evil; without wisdom, without strength, there being none righteous, no, not one; all being shut up, and concluded under sin, they have neither power to will, nor to do; Now what can be called glad tidings unto a creature in this condition? surely nothing short of that, which tells him all is given; and that freely, without condition on his part, because he can perform none; without money, and without price, because he hath nought wherewith to purchase; and that the grace, which redresseth all his grievances, and replenished him with all good, is given him in Christ Jesus, who hath brought this life and immortality to light by the gospel; by his birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection: confirming all his blessings and glory, unto his Church, by the grace of union. This appears to be the gospel of glad tidings, and is a doctrine with which the scriptures abound.

The law, is considered as the very opposite of this; consisting of commands, to fulfil its precepts on pain of damnation, of threatenings, and curses, against all who offend it, though

but in one point, and never makes any promises of happiness unto mankind, but upon condition of perfect obedience; which is always implied, (though not expressed) in every requisite, yea. even the most minute, entitling to the inheritance of the promise. The doctrine of rewards and punishments, is indeed contained in the law; but then it rewards none but such who fulfil every jot and tittle thereof: and curseth every one, who continueth not to do all that is written in the book thereof.

The gospel gives us all, without requiring ought of us. But the law, giving us nothing, requires all of us. And thus distinguishing them in the scriptures, we appeal from the law, unto the gospel: Our authority for so doing, is founded on what follows; whatsoever the law saith, it saith unto them that are under it: But Jesus was made of a woman, made under the law, therefore the law speaks unto him; and commands him to perfect obedience. But, the law can only curse the sinner: God sent "his Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, he was made sin for us, Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." The equity of which proceeding, appears from the union subsisting between Christ and the Church; of which I have sufficiently spoken. And thus, considering the whole law fulfilled in Jesus, its precepts obeyed, its penalties endured, he now inherits the promise: And apprehending ourselves in him, united unto him, through all his doings, and sufferings, his condition, and state is ours. And thus standing in him, we can indeed read the law, or the doctrine of rewards and punishments, without fear: Because the punishment, yea, all the threatenings in the book of God, have been executed upon us (as sinners and law-breakers) in him. Hence is it we dare not read the demands of the law unto ourselves, as distinct, or separate from the view of our union and oneness with him: because we cannot answer them; it being only designed as a ministration of death, to slay us to ourselves, and to make us dependent on him. Nor, dare we read any one threatening in the scriptures against the sinner, and ungodly, unto ourselves, out of him; because we cannot endure it. And, to imagine from any worthiness in ourselves, that we come not under those characters, which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against, and which, are so dreadfully threatened in the word, is, to be most wretchedly ignorant of the spirituality of God's law, and consequently, of the condition of human nature; for, where the holiness of the law is known, it will appear, that there is not one obnoxious character in the scriptures, which (according to the purity of the law) doth not belong to all mankind: nor can the most upright amongst men, in justice deny its belonging unto them: Therefore, our exemption from such characters, and from the punishment due unto them, is only by union with Christ: where his character is upon us before the Father. And, according to the consciousness we have of our salvation state, standing here, we are free from the fear of present or future punishment, having seen the end of it in Christ Jesus, and therefore are no longer to be influenced thereby. And as to the promised reward, the promises were made unto Abraham, and to his seed: which seed (according to the apostle) is Christ; it is also to be observed, that previous unto inheriting the promise, there must be a fulfilling of the law; to make it appear that the promises of God are not against the law. Where the promises in general speak unto man, it is unto him, as willing, obedient, repentant, fearing the Lord, believing, &c. every which characterism amounts unto what the law demands of man, viz. Satisfaction for its dishonour, received by sin that is past, and perfect obedience unto its precepts for the future. And although those requisites are not expressly mentioned in every promise, they are nevertheless implied, otherwise the promises of God would be against the law, which God forbids. Now, if the promise only rewards the man whom the law approves of, as holy, just, and true, it is easy to perceive that Jesus only is the man: "For all the promises of God, in him are yea, and in him amen. 2 Cor. i. 20, "Therefore the rewards are his, he as the head is crowned with glory, honour, and immortality; whilst every member by union with the head partakes of his honours: Whereas, to expect reward for the work of our own hands, would be to set up for ourselves, to act independent of our head, and to refuse him the pre-eminence in all things. But when we give him this, we are neither influenced by the fear of punishment or hope of reward, but by our head, Christ alone; our hearts are in his hand, and committing ourselves with all our concerns unto him, we permit him to guide us, and are passive with him. And certain it is, the more we are delivered from that religion which consists in self-seeking, the less injurious we are in this present world.

Object. Doth not your description of the person unto whom the promises belong, make salvation conditional, by asserting that the promise rewards none, but such whom the law approves of? This contradicts the apostle's doctrine, "by grace ye are saved."

Answ. That God is sovereign, I grant, but that he saves mankind from mere sovereignty, or arbitrary grace, without having respect unto his law, as a transcript of his own perfections, I think I ought to deny: Because he has pledged his faithfulness and truth, unto his law, that the transgressor should be punished; and that it should be established, rather than made void, by the faith of the gospel: whereas the law would be against such promises, as hath no respect unto its justice and purity. But "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, he will magnify the law, and make it honourable." Isaiah xlii. 21. Again, grace without truth; or salvation, without respecting the purity, and justice of the law; would be to pour contempt upon the death and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, as not necessary unto salvation; and to make it either merely accidental, from the rage of his enemies; or at farthest, exemplary only:

which supposition, would overturn, and invalidate the testimony of the scriptures, concerning his fulfilling all righteousness, enduring the curse of the law, and washing us from our sins, in his own blood. Again, to suppose that mankind are saved by any new law, consisting of repentance, faith, and new obedience, substituting sincerity, in the stead of perfection; I say to suppose this, would be to make God changeable: first, giving a law, as a rule of righteousness, and a standard, whereby to know good and evil; and, in process of time giving another, upon easier terms: which could not be, without a change in his perfections: his nature, and perfections being the original of every law, given by him to mankind. But I would not multiply words, to confute what hath not the least shadow of reason, or foundation in the scriptures: For Jesus says, "think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil: For verily I say unto you, "till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass till all be fulfilled." Matt. v. 17, 18. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Luke xvi. 17. It is evident that our Saviour means by this law, that which was given upon Sinai: nor, did he give any new commandment, which was not included in that law, as appears from his testimony elsewhere. But, when I assert that the promises are only fulfilled on such whom the law approves of, and that Jesus only was the man, thus approved of God; I consider him, under the capacity of the second Adam; including the people in himself: who, by union with him, inherit the blessing. And, though they can upon this consideration, claim the forgiveness of sin, as an act of Justice in God; yet are they saved by grace: Their election in Christ, their union with him, their eternal life, with all the blessings thereof, was God's purpose, and grace, given them in Christ Jesus, before the world began: according to which grace they are saved. Again, as it was grace that founded, so was it grace that executed this plan of salvation; we being passive in the hand of grace: when he washed us from our sins in his own blood, when he created us a-new, and presented us unto himself a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; we, as in him, being in passivity: inactive, and incapable of merit, makes that to be mere grace unto us as individuals, which unto him as including mankind, was conditional.

Object. The doctrine of union with Christ, (before faith) and of salvation in him, tends to make faith, or believing void: because, if I am united unto Christ, justified, forgiven, and accepted in him before I believe, where is the necessity of believing at all?

Ans. To build without a foundation, is to labour in vain. How shall they believe, except they hear? saith the apostle: And what shall they hear, if the truth to be believed, hath no existence until it be believed? but, having spoken unto this under the article of union before faith, I wave it here.

I would only ask, is it from the belief of our union with Christ, and salvation in him: or from the disbelief thereof: that occasion is taken to live in unbelief, and believing counted unnecessary? not from the latter according to the objection; because, to disbelieve a falsehood, is negative orthodoxy: and to say it is from the former, is the most palpable contradiction; because, whosoever believeth that believeth what the gospel proposes to be believed: therefore, the objection of course falls unto the ground.

Every man, proposing a system unto his fellow-creatures, doth it with a view that they should believe it; be it true or false: so also, when union with Christ, and salvation in him before they apprehend him, is taught the people, is it not with a view that they should believe it, and believing, rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory? It certainly is: and therefore, is not designed to keep them in unbelief. Again, it is the word of God, whereby faith comes: the declaration, even unto unbelievers, of their warfare accomplished, and their iniquities pardoned as well attested in the scriptures, hath certainly a more genuine tendency to produce faith, and confidence in God, than to tell them if they will believe, &c. they shall be justified, their sins be expiated, and forgiven. However smoothly, and artfully, this may be worded, it is impossible to free it from the idea of condition, and what is yet worse, such a condition, as man hath neither wisdom, will, nor power to fulfil; yea, it is still in effect to preach the law. Believe, and thou shalt be saved: is certainly similar unto, do this and live; man in himself, being as capable of doing the one as the other. When mankind are taught, that their eternal salvation depends upon believing, (and what is yet more strange, believing a matter which is not fact until believed) it is natural for every man, whose conscience is alarmed, to attempt it; but the more he endeavours, the farther he is off; like rowing against a violent stream: the dread of coming short through unbelief, and his weakness, and utter incapacity to believe, rushes upon him like a torrent, bears him back with violence: until discouraged, and enervated, he sinks, overwhelmed with fear and bondage. Indeed, where believing is only respected as a bare assent unto a proposition, mankind may with some shadow of reason talk of their abilities, and of the easiness of the condition, pretending that it is an instance, of the richest, freest grace, where salvation is promised upon believing. But it is not always practicable with a mind that is in earnest to assent unto a human proposition without demonstration, much less respecting divine things; because, the difficulty in believing, increases in proportion to the magnitude, and concernment of the matter believed, which difficulty, is owing unto the propensity of human nature, to an evil heart of unbelief, unto the remoteness of heavenly things from our natural ideas, and their contrariety unto our senses. Believe, and thou shalt be saved, (equal to any other law precept) when enforced upon the mind of man, generating with his weakness, begets unbelief, and fear, but never produceth faith: that comes only by the word of life, that word which bringeth salvation, de-

claring him, as made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that whosoever glorieth, should glory in the Lord. The belief of the truth cometh by hearing of its perfection, reality and immutability: of our being delivered from the curse, in him who was made a curse for us, of our being saved in him, with an everlasting salvation, of his being such an high-priest as becometh us: In brief, of our oneness with him, and indisputable right from thence, to consider ourselves according unto him, as our head and husband. Thus, whilst men are *not* put upon believing in order to save themselves, but are taught calmly to hear the word that bringeth salvation, they according to the power of the Holy Ghost, either instantaneously or gradually credit the report: and consequently enter into the belief of the truth, without their once *attempting* to believe, or troubling or perplexing themselves about it. Whilst such who are more concerned about their believing, than the truth of Christ, are distressed under the difficulty, yea, the impossibility of their performing it, when they have exerted themselves to the utmost. Therefore as the doctrine of union with Christ (before faith) and salvation in him, appears in this light, viz. the word by which faith cometh, nothing is more notorious than the unreasonableness of the objection, that it makes void faith.

Object. But doth not such an union with Christ destroy his pre-eminence, tending to exalt man, to the degrading of Christ.

Answ. By no means: it rather establisheth his pre-eminence, where the people as the members by union with him the head, are chosen, beloved, called, saved, and accepted of God. They receive no honour, grace, or blessing, but by him: and being apprized of this, he is all their hope and salvation. They look unto the Father, by him; nor dare they at any time approach him, but in him. He hath done all, suffered all, and obtained all. But the glory which he hath received, he freely gives unto them: whilst they confess him their head and Saviour: and as such, they honour him, and eternally give him praise. Christ in his office capacity, answers unto the idea of the human body; which being one, is composed of many members: the church being his body, is composed of many people, of which he himself is a member, *viz.* the head, the pre-eminent, and most highly exalted; upon whom all the members are dependent for honour; the head only, wearing the crown: for unction. the head only was anionted: for all blessings, the head only receives them immediately from God, being always the medium between him and the body, and appointed to guide, influence, and nourish it. Every member brings its tribute unto the head, and with praise, confesseth his pre-eminence; whilst the head is not ashamed to call them brethren. The more highly they perceive themselves exalted, the more glorious and eminent the head appears before them: for as much as through all exaltations in time and eternity, a just and proportionable distinction is kept up and maintained, between the head and members, in dignity, beauty, and glory; and this all the members know, when influenced by their head; therefore the doctrine of union with Christ, doth *not* destroy his pre-eminence, nor exalt mankind unto his dishonour.

Object. But doth not the doctrine of union, which supposes Christ to suffer under the character of the sinner, contradict the apostle, who saith, "Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust." 1 Pet. iii. 18.

Answ. To intimate that Jesus was a sinner, in thought, word, or deed, is what I never intended, but would abhor the thought, as highly blasphemous: nay, the prince of this world when he came, having nothing in him, was therefore constrained to appear in visible form, and tempt him by his outward senses. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens; this was his proper, personal, individual character; and in this sense the apostle is to be understood speaking, when he saith, the just died for the unjust. But then we are told by another apostle, that he (*viz.* God) "hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin," 2 Cor. v. 21; from which it appears, that he who in his individual character was sinless, was yet notwithstanding, as the head and representative of the church, made sin, yea, made a curse for us: and under that character, was punished with that death, and condemnation, which was due to man's offence. And this accounting of him a sinner, in the eye of justice, as it was equitable, so was it not from any personal guile; for he knew no sin, but from his union unto the sinful people, which rendered the punishment of their sin upon him, an act of divine, and strict justice. Thus it appears, that the doctrine of union, which represents Jesus suffering under the character of the sinner, doth not suppose him such in his own particular person; nay, strongly witnesseth the contrary, and respects him only thus, by such an imputation, as (considered on the article of union) is just and true with God, and man.

Object. This doctrine of union, as it speaks of our being one with Christ, in all he did, and suffered, seems contrary unto his testimony by the prophet; where he says, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Isaiah lxiii. 3.

Answ. It is evident from the words, that his meaning is; he received no help, or assistance from the people; this the fifth verse sheweth, "I looked and there was none to help, &c. therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me." The doctrine of union contains no such proposition as this, that the people were fellow helpers with Christ, when he atoned for sin, and destroyed the enemies of their salvation. In this sense they were not with him. In this sense we were not with Adam when he sinned, we were not abetting, concurring, and active in his offence; and yet we were in him, according unto union; in him offending in the great transgression.

We were also with Christ, and in him,

through all he did and suffered; though not active, not aiding, or assisting in his obedience, nor enduring any part of his torments, according to our sensation. In this sense, he "trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him." And when the scriptures speak of our being in him, of being crucified with him, raised with him, sitting together in heavenly places in him, &c. as they evidently speak of these things according to union; so, when compared with our Saviour's saying by the prophet, before mentioned; it appears that we were in him, and with him, through all: but not active; we were altogether in a state of passivity, whilst the toil, and torment, were wholly his. Yet through all, he was greatly conscious of his including the people in himself, his life, and death, being that of the whole body, "for if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." Thus, though we were not with him, as helping, or assisting him according to the prophet; yet were we always in him, and with him, according to the grace of union, so abundantly taught in the scriptures. The objections already mentioned, and which I have answered, being those which chiefly arise in the minds of serious unprejudiced persons against the doctrine of union, I shall not consider any more at present, as I do not intend any thing controversial, and have no expectation of pleasing the captious.

I shall proceed to consider, as proposed at first, a few of the never-failing springs of consolation, which arise from the grace of union with Christ.

And first, from the harmony of the divine perfections (as manifestly established in the grace of union) is a consolatory consideration, every man apprending it, can abundantly testify: we can have no confidence towards God, whilst we imagine that his attributes are contrary to us.* And I am persuaded that this imagination is very natural unto all such who have seen human nature in its ruins; and, striving with all wisdom, power, and diligence, to repair its breaches, have found that their utmost efforts have been like untempered mortar, which still falls off, and makes the breach worse: or, like a piece of new cloth, put upon an old garment, still enlarging the rent. Where persons have been thus exercised, (though they might at times have a faint hope in the mercy of God) they have thought it inconsistent with his justice and purity, to save them from the wrath to come. But when the grace of union with Christ is manifest unto them,

* Should it be objected, that the perfections of the Deity, by reason of his infinite greatness and glory, are unknown to us: that we have no *certainty* about them, and therefore that it is arbitrary to attempt the proof of any thing thereby: I would answer, "whoso cometh unto God, must believe that he is." But, how to believe that he is, how to conceive of a being without properties, I know not: I therefore must conceive of the Divine Being, according to such properties of his nature, as instinct, rectified by revelation, suggests. God is a being infinite in power and goodness; and goodness diversified, is justice, truth, purity, love, mercy, &c. Should it be objected, that by reason of ignorance, it is possible our ideas of justice, truth, mercy, love, &c. may not be strictly true, and consistent with the nature of such properties, especially when we ascribe them to God. *Answer.* God deals with us according to revelation, and requires us to determine of things thereby: the apostle saith, "That the Gentiles which have not the law, are a law unto themselves, having the law written upon their hearts, accusing or excusing them;" suggesting to them, such a thing is just, and such unjust; this is true, that is false: this mercy, but that is cruelty; such is love, and such is hatred; the one they approved of as good, and ascribed to the Divine Being, as his nature and properties, and the other they censured as bad, and thereby distinguished all evil beings. This simple voice of nature, differs from revelation only as the lesser light which rules the night, differs from the greater which rules the day: and what is discoverable by the lesser light, is much more so by the greater; for revelation reflecting upon those innate principles, throws such a light around us, that we can come much farther, see more clearly, and determine with greater certainty. Thus our natural ideas of justice, truth, mercy, love, &c. (as simple, before debauched with passion and prejudice) are improved by the scriptures; until we discern the infinite difference between the nature of God, and the nature of man; the former appears holy, just, true, merciful, and gracious, whilst the latter is quite the reverse; every man living being altogether vanity. If it is possible that our ideas of the divine perfections should be wrong, then have we no rule, whereby to discern between good and evil; we may give up the scriptures, renounce the evidence of nature, shut our ears to its voice, and commence sceptics in right earnest: we may no longer reprove any thing a man can possibly be capable of, for fear lest from a wrong idea of the divine perfections, we should reprove the good. And yet, such is the pride of man, that rather than he will be thought ignorant, or give up any indefensible tenet imbibed, he will shelter himself from the attacks of truth, under such pleas as these: how know we whether our ideas of the divine perfections are right, or not? thus to sap the argument of his antagonist, he would fain remove the foundation, yea, renounce the only authority which he or any other, has to conclude his own tenets right. Where the scriptures are acknowledged, the divine perfections are confessed the origin of that revelation: the latter being always considered as a transcript of his nature, and properties: and there we find him declared holy, just, righteous, true, wise, merciful, love, &c., nor hath he left us in the dark concerning the meaning of those terms; but by his commands, promises, threatenings, prohibitions, and in the latter days more perfectly by the doctrine, and example of his Son, he hath distinguished the good from the evil, separating between the precious and the vile. After such an exhibition of the divine properties, we are no longer at a loss to conceive of them with certainty, but are taught to look for truth in the harmony of them; it being found there, and only there. True it is, no man can comprehend him, nor by "searching find him out to perfection;" nay we see but in part, we know but in part, nevertheless, we apprehend and conceive of him, and by what we understand of him, we determine with certainty; therefore, whatsoever appears contrary to his perfections, according to what we apprehend of him, must be much more contrary with him, in proportion as his excellencies and self-knowledge, exceeds what we can possibly know of him: and here all proportion fails, and is lost for ever.

they can see all things consist by him: "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Mankind may now rejoice in the justice, and purity of God; yea, appeal unto him as just, as holy, as faithful, because according unto union with Christ, justice hath been satisfied, in his bloodshedding and death; where they in him, and he in them, have been fully punished for all their iniquity: upon which the Lord saith, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. x. 17. Hence he is just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. Yea, according unto his holiness, may they now have confidence in him. Though his eyes are purer than to behold iniquity; they may approach him, and stand before him with boldness; being by union with Christ, sanctified in him, holy in him, yea, he himself is their holiness: when this is discerned, we are no longer terrified at the holiness of the Divine nature, but have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus: yea, have unspeakable delight in the holiness of God, and infinite expectations therefrom. As the promise is to such who confess and forsake their sin, it is fulfilled upon us in Jesus; all the promises of God being in him yea, and in him, *Amen*. There have we, (with all the prayers, and supplications, strong crying and tears, which Jesus offered in the days of his flesh) confessed our sins unto God; and where he (having purged our sin) appeared the second time without sin unto salvation, we have eternally forsaken them: therefore we appeal unto the faithfulness of him who hath promised. In this blessed union, this infinite love and grace of God our Father, unto us in Christ Jesus; we see the harmony of his nature in all his dealings with us, and can sing with untold delight, thou art glorious for ever, our Father, our God, thou art love, thou art mercy, thou art righteousness, thou art justice, thou art holiness, thou art faithfulness, thou art truth, holy and reverend is thy name, O Lord God of Hosts! And yet all thy glorious perfections agree in one, to accept us, delight in us, rejoice over us, and bless us with eternal life, and all its happiness in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Again, in this gracious union, the scriptures are all fulfilled; and the key of David given us, that we may open, what no man can shut, and shut what no man can open. When men who are strangers unto this union, take it upon them to expound the scriptures, it is amazing to see, with what contradictions and inconsistencies it abounds! The precept, the threatening, the promise, and gracious declaration, are all jumbled together; often overthrowing by one, what they have set up by the other. But in Christ they all agree in one: in him the precept is fulfilled, the threatening endured, the promised reward received, and the free and eternal salvation of God, continually embracing the children of men: therefore, standing in the grace of union with Christ, we are at peace with all the scriptures. He in us, and we in him, have fulfilled all righteousness, fully kept the commandments of God, and suffered the punishment due unto our sins, and now inherit the promise, whilst the voice of words, yea, every terrifying sound is silenced: and nothing now heard but the sound of grace, love, and good will. Jesus is now the shield of our faith, by which we resist the fiery darts of the wicked one, would he come upon us with the threatening; and urge, because we answer the character of the sinner threatened, it must be executed upon us. Unto this fiery dart we oppose our shield, Christ as made a curse for us: would he set before us the precept, and insist on our destruction, because we cannot fulfil it; we still hold up our shield, and plead "Christ the end of the law for righteousness." Will he trouble us about the promises, and urge that God is either unfaithful, (who hath promised) otherwise we are not the people unto whom they are made, because we do not inherit them, have not the pure heart, the right spirit, do not yet see all things put under our feet, &c. our shield is still our defence; we answer but we see Jesus, and can testify that he who hath promised, is faithful; for Jesus hath the clean heart, the right spirit, the heart which hath the law written therein, that it may not depart from God; we see all things put under his feet, "insomuch that all the promises of God are in him, yea, and in him, Amen." Where union with Christ is manifest, it is enough for salvation and happiness, in time, and eternity, that he hath suffered, that he was obedient, that the promise is fulfilled in him, because being joint heirs with him, we have a just claim unto his inheritance: hither are we led unto righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This man is our peace, yea, even when the Assyrian comes into the land; our union with him, is our security, and defence against the face of the enemy: and as I have hinted before, his fiery darts cannot hurt the soul that abides in him; we are then able to resist them all, by holding up our shield, by opposing Christ unto all: he being our sun and our shield, not only our shield for defence, but our sun, to enlighten, and quicken us unto the use thereof. Did men but know, what safety and peace we have here, they would despair of terrifying us, as they hope to do, by their writings and preachments: loading us with opprobrious names, and ignorantly levelling the threatenings and curses, in the scriptures against us. Beholding him, to be the death of death, and the victory of hell; and how he hath hid us in the secret of his pavilion, from the strife of tongues, they would either join the angels' song: "Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, and good will towards men;" or else, despairing of making us miserable; their enmity, stingless towards us, but gnawing to their own bosoms, would so increase their torment, that they would willingly cease from us, forget us, and let us alone. What is impossible with man, is possible with God. If we read the scriptures out of Christ, they require impossibilities of us: hence it is, that some who are aware of this, and yet ignorant of the power of God, are obliged to have recourse unto new laws; laws of their own making, where, by a sincere intention, and

all possible obedience, they would evade the force of the scripture perfection, and put a foil upon the sword of the spirit: but truth needs no artifice, unto this sword, unfoiled, sharp, and two-edged as it is, piercing through the soul and spirit, joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts, and intents of the heart, Jesus bared his bosom: and sheathing it in his own heart's blood, the divine, glutinating power thereof, hath rendered it impossible to draw it again to another execution; God is just and true, and *will* not; men or devils *cannot*.

When we read the scriptures in Christ, we determine according to the possibility of things with God, unto him who believeth, all things are possible. The impossibilities and jarrings, with which the letter abounds: such as the demands of perfect obedience, of satisfaction for sin, of salvation by grace, by works, of the forgiveness of sin by Christ, and yet judged according to the deeds done in the body, and giving an account at that day for every idle word, &c. all this, I say hath its harmony and perfection in Jesus, nor have all the masters in Israel, for these seventeen hundred years, (though there have always been those who attempt it) been able to point out a reconciliation, and harmony of scripture out of him. But in him, as the representative of man, as having the people in himself, and he in them, the preceptive part is fulfilled perfectly;—and all the threatenings executed upon the sinner, in him: in him saved by grace, in him justified by works, accepted in him having redemption in his blood the forgiveness of sin. Our account for the idle word, is, that in ourselves we are carnal, sold under sin, and have no good thing; but, that in Christ we are filled, in him sanctified, in him accepted, and therefore appeal from the first Adam, unto the second. In like manner we account for the deeds done in the body, Jesus having atoned for the evil, and done the good. These, and all other parts of scripture, which may appear in a critical, and contradictory light, unto a person who hath not yet apprehended the union, is yet nevertheless consistent, harmonious, and gracious, unto all such who know what it is to be one with Christ, and Christ with them. In this light we can read the scriptures with pleasure, in seeing all fulfilled in him, every dark saying opening in him, and he gloriously triumphant, filling all in all. We also read them profitably, forasmuch, as speaking thus of Christ, they hush and banish the fears arising from nature or temptation; they fortify the mind against the face of the enemy, cherish and support us, under all the vicissitudes of life: and when depressed beneath the sense of human nature in its ruins, they present us with a glorious prospect of immortality, in the perfect resemblance, and likeness of Jesus; and to warm, and refresh the mind more effectually, they bring the prospect near, and show us *now* the workmanship of God created anew in Christ Jesus, now passed from death unto life, it is done, saith Jesus, I am Alpha and Omega.

Again, from the grace and truth of union, the Christian hath a right to reckon of himself, of his state and condition towards God, according to Christ; according to the state and condition which he is in: hence saith the apostle, "reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. vi. 11. And O (what grace is this!) that we helpless worms, whose every word, work, and thought is unholy, yea, in whom according to the stongest testimony of our senses, and reason, there is yet found the motions, life, and love of sin; should have a right to reckon ourselves dead unto sin: dead unto what we yet feel the *life* of, dead unto what we yet feel the *love* of, dead unto what is yet stronger than we, and against which, our utmost efforts when compared with its strength, are feebleness itself; it esteems all our iron as straw, and our brass as rotten wood; and, yet to reckon ourselves dead unto this, what an amazing reckoning it is! Yea, not only dead unto sin, whereby we are exempted from its filth, guilt, and condemnation. But we are to reckon ourselves positively holy, righteous, and fruitful, alive unto God! and that in opposition to all we see, feel or understand of ourselves, according to sense. What are we then to reckon ourselves by! by Jesus Christ our Lord; let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath "raised up a horn of salvation, in the house of his servant David according to the mouth of all his prophets, which have been since the world began." Union with Christ is our right of appropriation, otherwise we appropriate him and his benefits improperly, yea, unjustly, but in this light we can say, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world." John iv. 17. Hence, we have authority to conclude, if he is righteous, we are righteous, as he we are holy, as he we are wise; as he we have obtained redemption, and are accepted with him. This doth not suppose any excellency or worthiness in ourselves, whereby we are distinguished from our fellow-creatures, or set above our neighbours, for then we should glory in the flesh, and should become an adulterous generation, which glorying is not good, but deeply odious unto all who are espoused as chaste virgins unto Christ; insomuch that they can say, as hinted by the prophet, "shameful spuing shall be on their glory." Hab. ii. 16. But Jesus is our all, and our perfection is in him: "that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Against hope, believing in hope, in Christ will we glory, against all the hopeless, depressing views, we may have of ourselves, when comparing ourselves with ourselves. We would always believe in hope, in hope of his being accepted; of God's being well-pleased in him, and of our being accepted, and well-pleasing as him, by the grace of union with him: here we look to things eternal, and unseen, and not unto things present, which are seen. Our right and privilege, is to judge of ourselves and our state towards God, by union with Christ: by the Father's choice of him, his choice of us, by his love to him, his love unto

us, by his acceptance of him, his acceptance of us, by his eternal life, and glory, our eternal life and glory: and all this, without once considering the work of our own hands, or the desires, yearnings, or meditations of our hearts. But passing from ourselves unto Jesus, we are wholly found in him, not having our own righteousness, &c. Unto all who know themselves, this is certainly a life-giving word, the word that bringeth salvation; nor can any thing but that self-righteous principle, which is abhorred and detested of God, withstand it; and that letteth, and will let, until it be taken away, which the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming. But, unto all the Gentiles, the outcast, the destitute, the sinners amongst mankind; with all who know themselves, and groan beneath the miseries of man; here are tidings of great joy: there is a Saviour born unto you, a Saviour who is Christ the Lord; and what is more, though you are worthless, he is worthy; though you are lost, he is found: though you are unrighteous, unholy, unwise, yet he is righteous, holy, wise: and withal, so nearly related, so closely united unto you, that you may reckon yourselves to be what he is, and viewing him as yourselves through all he did and suffered, have your conscience purged from dead works; stand washed, and acquitted in his bloody death, and have the answer of a good conscience towards God, by his resurrection.

Moreover, in the grace of union the foundations are raised, and a glorious truth presented unto our view; which as it is perfect, and permanent, before our believing, so is it, if at any time we should be overtaken with unbelief and doubtfulness. This is that which at first authorizes, excites and encourages us to credit the gospel report. This is that, which strengthens in us what is often ready to die. This is that which raises us when fallen, which brings us back when we have wandered, and affords strong consolation, unto all who have fled unto Jesus for refuge; hence if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, &c. Whilst he wears the character of righteous, we shall be accepted of God, and glorious in his sight; and that is everlastingly, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for-ever. The gospel is here a relation of facts, and of who Jesus is, what he hath done, and that he hath loved us, hath saved us; hath washed, forgiven, and accepted us; the divine beauty and reasonableness of which, appears in the grace of union. This grace doth not require us, sophistically and unnaturally, to make that a truth by believing, which was not a truth before; but first proposes Jesus, as the truth, the grand original truth, before all things, and by whom all things consist. The ocean whence the rivers of grace and providence first had their rise, and whither, (after having run through the intricasies of time) they tend again, discharging and emptying themselves of all their floods, into the bosom of that mighty deep whence they first received them: that his might be the kingdom, power, and glory. That he is the truth of all the types, predictions, and prophecies of the Jews, the truth of wisdom, righteousness, holiness, redemption, and salvation unto the Gentiles, is what the gospel declares; affirming, illustrating, arguing, persuading, until the arm of the Lord is revealed, and the report believed. Thus faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Hence, I would cry unto the ends of the earth, your warfare is accomplished, your iniquity is pardoned. You, who are lovers of pleasure, pursuing the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, as the highest, chiefest good. Wherefore will you spend your money for that which is nought, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Wherefore will you thirst after vanity, and attempt filling your belly with the east wind? The Lord, your God, hath given you a land flowing with milk and honey, beauty, honours, riches, length of days, wisdom, strength, perfection of righteousness, holiness and liberty unlimited, all divine, all eternal, all heavenly glorious, are yours in Jesus, whose riches are unsearchable. Hence, he calls all the ends of the earth to look unto him, let those glorious prospects of grace and salvation, the bounty, and benevolence of God to men, render the fashion of this world, old and unseemly in your eyes, until it pass away, and you be found looking at the King in his glory, and the land which once was very far off; but is now brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. This when seen, shall sicken your ear to every sound, your eye to every object, and your heart to every enjoyment, wherein the voice of Jesus's blood, the beauties of his person, the riches, and greatness of his salvation, are not made manifest; and shall learn you to separate between the precious and the vile.

You, who with Esau, have been seeking repentance with tears, and that for a long season, but have not yet found it: unto you I also call, and ask you why will you die? Consider the apostle and high-priest of your profession, Jesus Christ; let his strong crying and tears, his tears of blood, yea, rivulets wept from every wound, and perspiring pore, let his agonies, pains, and unknown sorrows, and all for the transgressions of the people, be well considered: for he is exalted a prince, and a Saviour, and gives you this repentance; why will you yet cry, bless me, even me also, O my Father; he hath blessed you in Christ, with all spiritual blessings; whilst all those grievances which you labour under, by looking unto yourselves, and judging according to appearances, are redressed in him: why then will you die for lack of righteousness, whilst he is your righteousness and strength? why will you faint under the sense of your unholy dispositions, whilst he is your holiness? why will you groan in the bondage of nature, while he is your liberty? O! why will you perish, for want of what you have? of what is eternally yours, by the gift of God by the grace of union, by the love, and integrity of your head, high-priest, and Mediator, Jesus; who is faithful in things pertaining unto God, and man? He is found of such who seek him not, and reveals himself unto them who have not asked after him; whilst you

who have been mourners all your days, frequenting his ordinances, and seeking him in all appointed means, are yet strangers unto, and neglecters of the great salvation: wherefore? because you seek it as it were by the works of the law, you seek to establish what God hath rejected; and are always rejecting what God hath chosen: therefore saith the apostle, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God;" be ye reconciled unto his grace, unto the riches, and salvation thereof, unto the method and manner of its working, and appearance; "for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And this he hath already done for us, and to be reconciled unto this, is to be happy. Thus Jacob is grace, and Esau is works, the one obtaining what he had not expected, nor sought after: whilst the other, who sought it carefully with tears, obtained it not. Yea, and where there hath been a drawing back, a falling away from the truth as it is in Jesus, until sunk in misery and darkness, until having nothing left them to look at but themselves, they are affrighted, and at their wits end: unto them would I call, and exhort them not to sorrow as men without hope; because Jesus is alive, and liveth for evermore. Your God, and Father is not disappointed in you; you have not deceived him: he never expected any thing from you, more or less, than what he hath found. The satisfaction which he had in you at first, was beholding you as the travail of his soul, and as such, he beholds you still. Your unbelief cannot make his grace of none effect, and though you have denied him, yet he cannot deny himself. That which was a truth before you believed, at the first, *viz.* Christ being your "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," is a truth now, even when you have ceased to believe: insomuch, that in every time of need, though you have sadly departed from him, you have the same foundation, authority and encouragement to believe and be assured as you had at the first. It is the scripture testimony of Jesus, what he is, and what he hath done and suffered, that is the ground of our confidence; and not the reflexion that we repent, believe, or obey; and it is most certain that this ground remaineth, that this foundation is unshaken, for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever;" and that our unbelief, or any change passing over us, as in ourselves, cannot alter him who is unchangeable, and always righteous and accepted. In him we are always as he is, according to which similitude God always beholds us, and accepts us; therefore, our change of frame or disposition, cannot change his views of us; for, as he only beholds us in Jesus, he can always say that he "beholds no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel, the Lord his God is always with him, and the shout of a king is among them." O! glorious grace! O triumphant love! let him who is fallen from hence, say, rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, for though I fall, I shall yet arise. Doth not this testimony quicken unto faith and confidence in Jesus? Doth it not obviate, and silence all the complaints and objections of the broken and despairing spirit, and bring back to the Saviour, that which was driven away? surely it does; thus, from the grace of union, which renders Jesus such an high priest as becometh us, we obtain favour, and find grace to help us in every time of need. Salvation, and perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord, by union with him, is that glorious truth; which first authorises, encourages, and influences to believe: and that which preserves us spotless and acceptable unto God, when we fail to believe, and credit his testimony; and infinitely above all other considerations, hath a tendency to raise us in our hope and confidence towards God; and to preserve us from desperation. It is therefore unjust and unnatural, to charge this doctrine with having a tendency to indulge people in unbelief. Considering the condition of man, and the testimony of Jesus, I would challenge all the masters of Israel, to produce a system, more powerfully tending to reconcile man unto God: and to raise the doubtful soul unto confidence in him: let all such, who (through the experience of human weakness, or the power of temptation) are fallen from the faith of the son of God and sunk to the hell of their senses, consider this matter; and renew their strength as eagles.

Furthermore, from the grace of union, we are taught to consider Jesus as the hero of the Scriptures. All the members bring their tribute unto him, as the exalted head. If what I have already aimed at proving, is true; that primarily as the head of his body the church, all the promises were made unto him, all the threatenings fall upon him, &c. then by him we inherit, by him we have atoned: we claim no good out of him, nor will we acknowledge the evil, for as much as in him we have been purged. All the beauteous characters in the Scriptures are his, and are only typical in the persons unto whom they are given in the letter; which is abundantly evident, from the contrast appearing in every one of them; they being all guilty of vices, diametrically opposite to the virtues for which they are famous; righteous Noah and Lot, both charged with drunkenness, and one with horrid incest. Faithful Abraham with distrust, meanness of spirit, lying, or equivocating, as in the case of Sarah. Meek Moses with unwarrantable passion, unadvised speech, and such swellings at the waters of strife, as barred his entrance into the promised land. It charges holy David, the man after God's own heart, with such weaknesses and crimes, as are by no means consistent with holiness; but were a glaring proof of his heart being very unlike the heart of God. And Solomon so famous for wisdom, had his dark side; how great were his follies: and whilst much might be said for his wisdom, how many instances might be given of the most stupid and God-provoking foolishness in him. Job also admired for his patience, gave the most pregnant proofs of impatience and peevishness. It will be natural to inquire from hence, why the Scriptures which give those men the most beautiful and amiable characters; as righteous, faithful,

meek, holy, wise, and patient, should at the same time present us with a contrast in each of them drawn in such strong colours, that the most palpable contradiction appears? The answer is easy, let God be true, and every man a liar. Those men, were all types of Jesus, their characters figurative of his: therefore divine wisdom thought proper, not only to stain their glory, by suffering such blemishes in their spirit and conduct, as gave the lie unto their virtues, but also to record the same; that at best they might appear but mere shadows, reserving the substance for Jesus. Therefore who so reading the characters of those men, are not taught to look beyond them, unto the blessed Jesus, have yet read the Scriptures to little purpose, having not yet known them, nor the power of God. Neither the prophets, nor apostles, wrote with the view that such who venerate their writings, should have their persons in admiration; neither theirs, whose character they drew, as eminent, and famous, in the Church of God. But, the spirit which moved them designed through the whole, the honour, and glory of Jesus Christ: that passing on from every man we might attain to the admiration of the person, and excellencies of Jesus, as the only righteous, the only faithful, the only meek, wise, holy, and patient, until all with an unwavering tongue shall cry, thou art altogether lovely, worthy is the lamb, of the kingdom and glory. But, lest any who are used to please themselves with mankind, having men's persons in admiration, should think we deal hardly with the saints of old, (for it is often found more dangerous, even among Christians, to speak lightly of the pious men, than it is to speak so of Christ) when we say that they were not the men, which they are represented to be, their conduct and behaviour considered:—I would here premise what will be equally obnoxious unto them, that those persons were really what the Scriptures say they were, that is, righteous, faithful, meek, holy, wise, patient, &c. without any exception: They were so in Christ. I know the Jew however Christianised, by profession, will either rave, or sneer at this; but let him, he that sitteth in the heavens, will laugh him to scorn: and the Christians indeed, will remain undisturbed. I would calmly ask, what is the medium between Christ and man?—if it is not true of them in themselves, as I have it is not; nor true of them in Christ, as the Greek and Jew insinuates; where is it true of them? it must have its truth somewhere, I speak unto you who acknowledge the Scriptures. I am well aware of your answer, viz. the divine wisdom characterises them according to what they were in part, and not in the whole. I would ask another question, have we any other rule for the trial of right and wrong, good, and evil, than the divine law? and doth not that law demand perfection? doth it not when broken in one point, declare the transgressor guilty of the whole? doth it not curse whomsoever continueth not to do all things written in the book thereof? and Jesus saith, that heaven and earth shall pass away; but one iot, or tittle of the law shall not fail, until the whole be fulfilled. But having spoken of this matter before, I refer you unto it: and shall only observe here, the arrogance and impropriety, of assuming the character of righteous, meek, faithful, holy, &c. according to the works of our own hands or habits of the heart: This is flying in the face of God, and giving the lie to the divine perfections as revealed in the law; yea, it is in fact a denying our only Lord God, and Jesus Christ: for unto what purpose is he made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? is it not that whosoever glorieth, should glory in the Lord? But, when persons assume those characters from the consideration of what they are in part, as in themselves; they glory in themselves, and not in the Lord. This is that Antichrist of whom we were told that he should come, yea, who was so early in the world as the days of the apostles; and prevails so mightily in the Christian world at present, that the generality of Christians under his influence, are upon a level in faith and doctrine, with the Jews: or but very faintly distinguished from them: The Jew maintains the necessity of inward and outward holiness in every man, and looks for the Christ to come: The Christian, especially the reformed, with superior ardour, and, repeated asseverations, declares for the same way of holiness, and looks also for a Christ to come; an inward Christ, consisting of gracious habits, pious breathings, sincere, and upright dispositions, and which in effect, is to agree with the Jew, in declaring, that the man of Galilee, who was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem in the reign of Tiberius, was not the true Christ: Or according to the highest idea of him, was but a figure of an inward, and spiritual Christ to come; thus Antichristianly denying that the true Christ is come in the flesh. Again there are others, who would be distinguished from the Jew, by confessing that the true Messiah is come, and that according to his obedience, death and resurrection, he is the remote cause of man's salvation. But, then it seems if he is not applied, he is no Christ at all. Hence it is, that many who call themselves preachers of the gospel of Jesus, make use of this expression: an unapplied Christ is no Christ all. What can a Christian think of such a vile phrase as this?

This is in effect to make Christ a mere quality, a dispensation, which exists and takes place, upon a certain change wrought in the creature: A Christ created, and made by application.* And yet, how we should

*Jesus Christ as the only good, the true Balm, was applied unto our wounds and diseases, when he took part of the same flesh, and blood, with the children. And, as a plaister, or medicine, when applied, must unite and become one, with the wound or disease, that by its superior virtue, it might drain and swallow up, and eradicate the opposite evil; so Jesus united unto our infirmities, bare our sins, and sicknesses, and carried our sorrows; purging them by himself, through the things which he suffered, until his resurrection fully proved the evil eradicated. Hence he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. Thus, the grace and love of God, was applied to the misery of man, in the person of Emanuel;

apply what doth not exist, or is not true before, is, I confess, a subtility which I do not understand, and therefore, the phrase appears to me as ridiculously nonsensical as it is blasphemous: and the latter it is, if it has any meaning, because, it is certainly a denial of the person of Christ, and a setting up of another Jesus: such a one, as the apostle feared would corrupt the Corinthians from the simplicity which was in Christ. Our Saviour foretold the arising of false Christs, (and every Christ hath his prophets) and that they should shew great signs, and wonders. Except a few vain, insignificant pretenders, amongst the blinded Jews, who were not able to shew any great signs or wonders, but from pride, and lunacy, dreamt they were somebody; I say, excepting those, I never heard of any one, who pretended to be the Christ. And, if any poor lunatic, has at any time talked wildly of his being the Christ, he hath not deceived any body, neither could he shew great signs and wonders. Therefore, those could not be the false Christs spoken of, and yet the word of the Lord is true; false Christs there must be, and I think it behoves us to inquire what they are. False Christs are things which bear the name of Christ, and have that honour, power and glory attributed unto them, which belong only to Jesus of Nazareth: a prevailing deception, attested by great signs and wonders. If false Christs are those things which are called Christ, and are not, I think it is not impossible to find them out, and to prove that they are now in the world, and have deceived many. The false Christ is a compound of pride, darkness, deceit, self-love, enmity against the true Christ, &c. but then it bears the names of humility, the light within, faithfulness, truth, love to God, and zeal for holiness; (in contradistinction to that dangerous proposition, of salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ alone, and of being complete in him, though sinners in ourselves, where mankind are ignorant of the scriptures, and of the power of God, and yet reading and hearing of Christ being in them, and being also bid to examine themselves, whether Christ be in them, they look into themselves; thus inquiring, have I Christ, do I love God, and hate iniquity? am I changed? am I humble, heavenly-minded, thirsting to be more holy, and lamenting my faults? do I increase in light, knowledge and understanding? If I do, then I have Christ: this is Christ in me the hope of glory. This is the Christ whom many look unto, and respect as the true Christ. This hath its great signs, and wonders. This pretends to cast out devils, and to work such changes in mankind, as answers to the Ethiopian changing his skin, and the Leopard his spots; pretends to produce signs of it, in such, or such persons; once greatly vicious, but now made either perfectly holy, or in a great measure so; even perfect in parts, if that can be understood. Furthermore, the considerations of this great change, and the feeling of its holy tempers and dispositions; is a contemplation so ravishing, a sensation, or frame of spirit so transporting, that it triumphs over the fears of death and hell, and anticipating the joys and powers of the world to come, makes the deceived cry out, partly in the words of the apostle, "who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Who shall condemn? but then, taking liberty to differ from Paul, instead of founding it with him upon this fact, Christ died and rose again. The disciples of the false Christ rather cry, who shall condemn? I am converted, I believe, I bear the fruits of the spirit, I have the marks of grace in me! who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? and I am certainly one, for he has distinguished me from my neighbours! and made me holy as the elect of God, thanks be to God, I have by much assiduity in all the ordinances, by constant application unto all the means of grace, at last made my calling and election sure: and now how happy, how blest am I! come life, come death, I am ready: Thus can the false Christ shew great signs and wonders. True it is, this is ascribed to different causes; one cries, why me, why me, what am I that I should be so blest! and talks of discriminating grace, as though God was a respecter of persons. Whilst another says, O blessed self-denial, and patience: Now I am blest with the fruit of my labours and sorrows, I shall never repent of my watchings, fastings, and prayers, nor of the grievous mortifications I have passed though, since I am possessed of that holiness wherein I can see God. Whilst a third exults, that he has not been misled by that outward and carnal Christ, who might probably suffer in the reign of Tiberius, without the gates of Jerusalem: But that he has been obedient to the true spiritual Christ, who was always in him from his mother's womb, sometimes as a spirit of burning, convincing of sin, at other times as a spirit of judgment or a light shining in a dark place; shewing him what was right, with the path wherein he should walk: that he hath the faithfulness to follow this Christ, and not as many of his fellow-mortals, resisted the light, is now the joy of his heart. Thus however things are ascribed to different causes, and different terms made use of, yet the same matter is intended; and all come to

and all our grievances redressed in him. He, being according to the condition of his person and office, the physician, medicine and patient. With his stripes, we are healed. Of this grace and truth, the holy ghost is our witness; who is said to receive of the things which are Christ's, that he might shew them to the people. Hence, it is called in the Scriptures a manifestation, a revelation, or declaration, but never an application, as I remember: This being rather an adopted phrase of antichrist, to give false ideas on such an occasion; even such, that are most derogatory to the person, death and resurrection of Jesus. Far be it from me, to aim at making any man an offender for a word: but where words are expressive of facts, and of singular import, designed to form ideas, it is right to inquire whether they are warrantable or not, and, upon inquiry it will be found, that the word application, is not, when used as expressive of believing the gospel, or receiving Christ; especially where it is asserted, that an unapplied Christ is no Christ at all. Is not this to make his office, yea, his very being, to depend upon such an application? a most shocking proposition! and abhorred of all who conceive of Christ according to the Scriptures.

this point at last; that the true Christ, is a compound of righteous qualities, and holy dispositions in men. Hence it is that human virtue is idolized, and complemented with the name of Christian; upon this principle even heathen philosophers are supposed to have had Christ in them: especially such amongst them who were famous for their piety, though heathen. Yea according to this, it is enough to have appearances to whine, and cant, talk much of the work of the spirit, upon the heart,* of human goodness, moral virtue, and exclaim against sin and sinners: I say, if men have but those appearances, they are according to the principle of the false Christ, to be deemed devout, and pious Christians; though they speak in the most irreverent terms of the person of Jesus, and scandalize the doctrine of salvation alone by his blood; ridicule his mysteries as whimsies; and with the old Pharisees, accuse him as the ringleader of the wicked, and the cause of the profaneness which is in the world. And so zealous are mankind become for this holiness, or Christ as it is promiscuously called, that such who are considered as gospel ministers, will not now grant any thing farther concerning Jesus of Nazareth, than what they think tends to promote this holiness, or inward Christ: Thus is this made the grand criterion whereby to judge of all truth: it being now common to inquire upon any proposition concerning Jesus Christ, doth it tend to promote inward holiness and true heart-work? if it does, receive it: if it does not, reject it; let it be what it will. From hence it is evident, that this holiness within them, hath infinitely the preference before the person of Christ, since he shall not be allowed to plead his own cause, where there is the least suspicion of his doctrine clashing with their conceptions of inward holiness, or Christ in them. Like the Martyr Stephen's antagonists, they will then put their fingers in their ears, and run down his testimony with noise and tumult. But, if the least sparkle of this inward holiness, or Christ be seen, or in short, if there be nothing of this nature seen, provided there is a good will towards it, a hearty zeal and stickling for it, let it be (as before hinted) under whatsoever name it may, whether morality, virtue, piety, holiness, the work of the spirit upon the heart, or Christ within; I say, towards all such in whom any thing of this nature can be seen, or if they are but contentious for it; they have the most enlarged bowels and extensive charity. Towards all such, they are exceedingly prodigal of their favours; insomuch, that whether they desire it or not; yea, whether they will accept it or not, they will Christian them: Yea, if a Jew, a Mahometan, a Deist, or an Atheist, be according to the phrase, a good man, a holy liver, he must be supposed to have an interest in Christ, notwithstanding he do not believe in him, but rather reviles him; and whoever questions it, will be deemed a very uncharitable and censorious bigot. On the other hand, if a man hath a sinner character, makes no pretensions to inward holiness, is not contentious, or noisy about it; though he may believe in Christ, venerate him, have all his hope and dependence for salvation upon his death and blood: I say, a man of this character stands no chance: it would be reckoned credulous, yea, the greatest abuse of charity, to Christian such a man, or to conclude him interested in Christ. From this doctrine, those inferences naturally arise: A Jew, a Pagan, a Turk, a Deist, or Atheist, if good and virtuous, according to the beforementioned goodness, is preferable to the most zealous worshipper of Jesus, and believer in him, if imperfect and sinful. Again, goodness and holiness in man, by whatever name it is called, more infallibly demonstrates the accepted of God, the person with whom he is pleased; than Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, or any confidence or trust in him: consequently, this virtue, this holiness, this

*I would not be understood as speaking slightly of the spirit of truth, or of his operations in the heart of man, according to the scripture account thereof; which is there undeniably made to consist in receiving of the things which are his, (viz. Christ's) and in shewing them unto us; that Jesus Christ alone might be glorified: and this the spirit is constantly engaged in, until we answer fully in heart, and mind, unto the character of the true circumcision; who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. But in the spirit of error, reverses this character: pretends to shew mankind other excellencies than what are found in Jesus, such as reformations, changes, pious motions and desires in themselves: and this it doth, until their worship of God dwindle into form, their rejoicing be in the work of their own hands; and all their confidence be in things of the flesh.

Antichrist, or the false spirit, seeks not the glory of Jesus; but speaks of himself, of its own operations of joys, sorrows, hatred to the evil, and languishment after goodness; by him wrought on the heart; and teaches his anointed ones to conclude thence, that they are favourites of heaven: to look on themselves as greatly distinguished amongst mankind, by what they call inherent holiness: Yea, and to be jealous of the doctrine of Christ, because it holds forth to man, the testimony of salvation; bound up, and sealed, where Jesus is Alpha and Omega. This spirit, insinuates that the doctrine which treats of the person of Christ, of his life, sufferings, death, and resurrection; of our being justified and sanctified in him; is a very dangerous, if not a diabolical doctrine: and chiefly because if it does not immediately oppose, it teaches to slight, and disregard the work of the spirit upon the heart; will not suffer men to look unto that quarter for comfort: will not admit of it as an evidence for heaven: nor suffer them from thence to exalt themselves above their fellows: but will always be proposing Jesus as a salve for every sore, and a perfect redress of all grievances. Thus Antichrist accuses the spirit of truth, (because he glorifies Christ) of heresy; in denying the work of the spirit upon the heart: and supported by tradition, and its cloud of witnesses, it storms so violently, prates and insinuates so successfully, that it hath almost jostled Christianity out of the world: and, hath introduced instead thereof, gross enthusiasm, self-righteousness, bigotry, and superstition amongst the more zealously religious part of mankind, and amongst such who are less concerned, Deism, with all the pride of moral virtues. This is that spirit which I set my face against, and of which I speak, wherever I have through my book ranked this phrase, the work of the spirit upon the heart, amongst the cant terms of Judaism blended with heathenism.

inward work, is preferable to the person, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. To be able to draw those inferences from the principles of Free-thinkers, Socinians, and Arians, would not at all surprise: but to see them naturally rise, from the doctrines of such, who would be contradistinguished from the former, and considered as preachers of Jesus Christ, may possibly surprise some who have been used to say unto the work of their own hands, ye are our gods.

If we consider the Bible-saints and their excellencies, in a figurative light, as I have already hinted; our Jesus will appear the hero of the scriptures: or, if we respect them as being really in Christ, what they are characterized in the letter, (for it is easily proved that they were not so in themselves,) he still hath the pre-eminence in all things, and every beautiful character given unto man in the scriptures is primarily his: as the substance of the shadow, or as the head, who by union with the body, blesses all the members with his own condition, and character: whilst they, above all things, rejoice in his beauty, power, and excellencies. That one thing so greatly desired by the Psalmist, is granted unto all who discern their union with the head: namely, to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, to behold his beauty, and to inquire in his temple. Though the consideration of such a glorious salvation in Jesus, is infinitely refreshing, and delightful, yet is there a higher felicity, consisting in the clear views of his personal beauties, and glories. Thus the elders who surround his throne, though perfected in his likeness, wearing crowns of glory, palms of victory, cast all their honours, and themselves likewise, before his feet: prostrating, and singing incessantly, worthy is the Lamb: thereby intimating, that his personal worth, dignity, and beauty, as beheld by them, is their highest heaven, their sublimest consolation. For this the Saviour prayed, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory. Unto the eye of sense, there was neither form, nor comeliness, whereby men should desire him, when in the day of his humiliation, his judgment was taken away: when his face being more marred than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men, he was pressed with our sicknesses, sins, and sorrows: then, he appeared like the tabernacle of old, (as covered with badgers' skins) mean and contemptible, unto all such as judged according to appearance: but unto those who conceived aright of his beauty and glory, even then, his form was most excellent and his comeliness perfect, the fairest of the sons of men, grace and truth were poured into his lips. My beloved, (saith the spouse) is white and ruddy, the chief amongst ten thousand. Yea, he is made the central point of all beauties, and excellencies, as when thus described: "His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven, his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers. His lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings, set with the beryl, his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely." Thus gold, precious stones, ivory, marble, spices, flowers, trees, mountains, rivers, gums, birds, &c. are here collected, to form a composition of beauties, figurative of him. Yea, whatsoever is seen in all the creation of God, all the excellencies and beauties, whether they are glories terrestrial, or celestial, are figures of him: all transmitting their lustre to him, all pointing to him as their perfection, and he whose glory and honour was the ultimate end of their creation: All things were created by him, and for him, saith the Spirit. His beauties of holiness, how inexplicable! how divine! Pure, without austerity; wise, without vanity; humble, without pride; self-denying, without self-love; holy, harmless, undefiled; purer than the heavens, holier than the angels, he only is holy: he only is the Lord. Such was his self-denial, that though he was rich, yet he became poor. Though all honour, power, and glory, was originally his; his name and character the most exalted, yea, though without robbery he was equal to the Most High, yet "he took upon him the form of a servant, and made himself of no reputation." Whilst the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, the Son of Man had no where to lay his head! As a stranger, and pilgrim, he passed through the worlds which his own hands had made, and unfeignedly felt the want of such necessaries and refreshments, which the creatures, from man, to the reptile, yea, even to the smallest insect, through his providence, were abundantly supplied with. In all this he sought not himself, but through all his unchangeable motto was, not my will, but thine be done: it being his meat and his drink to do the Father's will. Such was his self-denial, that though he was that just one: in his own individual self was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens; yet was he content to be numbered amongst the transgressors; and to be accounted seditious, a rebel, a glutton, a wine-bibber, a blasphemer, a deceiver, a demoniac, an encourager, and ringleader of the most notorious sinners: unto those accusations, he replied not, but by his silence denying his holy character, he seemingly acknowledged the charge exhibited against him,* and submitting to the punishment, was content to make his grave with the wicked.

*Though as an individual he was perfectly holy; and the charge of sin brought against him by his enemies, as false as Satan; yet as the head and representative of the people, as personating the sinner, he confessed the charge by his silence. Otherwise it does not appear, wherefore he was silent, when the cause of truth called upon him to make his defence. That his great and unparalled humility was evident in this transaction, does not prove that his behaviour in this particular, was calculated *only* to exhibit that beauty. Therefore may we construe his silence a tacit acknowledgement of his being *made sin for us*.

He denied himself so far as to permit Satan, (a creature of his power, and one whom he had before crushed to everlasting darkness for his rebellion) to tempt him, and that with the glories of a world, which he himself had made, and which at that time, he upheld by the right hand of his power; all living, moving, existing in him, and governed by his providence. And also, with worshipping him, who was not only his creature, but a creature fallen and accused, and whose very being, was enmity against him. Yea, he suffered the tempter to sift him like wheat; to rush upon him with all his policy and power, by every gate of hell: to try him with despair, presumption, self-murder, and with an inordinate love of life, by using the most extravagant means for the preservation thereof: yea, even to hazard his knowledge of himself, of his own dignity and glory, as the Son of God, upon the success thereof.

Thus seeking, if by any means he might oblige him to deviate from his own law, and rule of righteousness, written by Moses, and the prophets. How beautiful his humility! he patiently endured the contradiction of sinners against himself. How conspicuous his love, through the things which he suffered! many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it. His meekness! how apparent, when as a lamb led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers dumb, he opened not his mouth: when he was reviled, he reviled not again, nor did he hide his face from shame and spitting, but calmly gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks, to them who plucked off the hair. These, and every other godlike disposition and perfection, shining in him, through his life and death, renders him at once the object of wonder, delight, and pleasure. Yea, such is his superlative beauty, that when we have considered all excellencies in heaven and earth with the utmost exactness and impartiality, we are still with relation to them all, constrained to cry, "As the apple-tree is among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." Surprisingly rare! one amongst thousands, yea, only one in all the wood: distinguished from all in fragrance, fruit, and shade. Well may every admiring worshipper say, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

He is beautiful in the majesty of his power, and the glory of his kingdom. All power in heaven, and in earth, is given into his hand. By him kings reign, and princes decree justice. The Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and to see his glory, (but behold a greater than Solomon is here,) And "when she saw his wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the siting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her."

We also, when we come up to Zion, to see the king in his beauty, with the queen standing on his right-hand, shining in gold of Ophir, are equally suprised, astonished, and smitten with wonder. How glorious the displays of his wisdom! in creation, redemption, and providence, especially in that admirable economy with which he governs his own house. There he shews the beauties of holiness, holiness for ever becometh his house, and reverence his saints. Of experience, having been tempted in every point like unto us. Of compassion, he has compassion on the ignorant, and such that are out of the way. Of sympathy, he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. His wisdom, love, and power, in guiding, protecting, enriching, and causing all things to work together for the good of them who love him, and are the called according to his purpose, is most beautifully seen here. The house which he had built, where through the labours of his life and death, he hath built us in himself, an habitation for God, through the spirit.

The meat of his table, his flesh is meat indeed, his blood is drink indeed: by union with which, we are fed with all his grace, and fruits. The sitting of his servant, the rest that remaineth for the people of God, which rest is in him, where all those who believe entering cease from their own works, as God ceased from his. The standing of his ministers, their continual readiness to execute his will; and with unwearied pleasure and delight, to bear his message to his church; he maketh his ministers a flame of fire, administering by the word of his cross, light and heat, all around them. Apparrelled with him who is the righteousness of the saints, they bear witness of his royalties, majesty, and glory, as the king of kings, and Lord of Lords.

His cup-bearers, those who offer everlasting praise, resulting from his blood and death; which, as the juice of the true vine, the fruit of his own doings, and sufferings, he drinks for ever new, in the kingdom of the Father. His ascent into the house of the Lord, the union of natures in his person; by which the man in him, is one with God, and therefore goes up unto the house of the Lord.

When the Queen of Sheba saw this, only in the figure, there was no more spirit in her: but breaking forth in strains of ecstasy, it exceedeth, saith she, "the fame which I heard, the half was not told me, happy thy men, happy these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, that hear thy wisdom, blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice."

What then must be the strains, when our great Solomon, in all his wisdom, majesty, beauty, and glory is seen. Such is the poverty of speech, yea, of the most expressive, words, that we are utterly incapable of declaring, what we then conceive of his eternal excellency. Whilst our utmost conceptions bear no proportion to his real glories, his transcendent beauties: but are as a moment of time to eternity. Thousands of thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand, stand before him: let us mingle with the multitude thus blest with his pre-

sence; saying with a loud voice, worthy is the lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing: and with every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth: and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. *Amen.*

A SUPPLEMENT

UNTO THE FOREGOING TREATISE ON THE DOCTRINE OF UNION: EXHIBITING A SPECIMEN OF APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

The matter and manner of the apostles' preaching, appears, when among Jews and Gentiles, they taught that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, the Son of God; and that he was crucified unto death, and on the third day rose again from the dead, for the forgiveness of sins, and the justification of mankind. And this they proved from the predictions of the prophets, from the pattern shewn unto Moses in the mount, and by undoubted miracles wrought in the name of that Jesus whom they preached. All who believed their testimony, were thereby sensible of salvation: there were no such doubts as these amongst them then, viz. How do I know whether he died for me, or whether I am particularly interested in him, &c. Those queries and criticisms are of later date than the apostolic age, and owe their existence unto the wisdom of this world, which in the decline of true Christianity, took place of that primitive simplicity, with which the first preachers of Jesus bear witness of him. They had their rise from the distinctions made amongst men, of predestinate and reprobate, as qualified, or unqualified for the grace of the gospel: of fruitful, as having a right to believe their personal interest in Christ, or unfruitful, whose interest in him is doubtful. Those distinctions once concluded upon, between self-righteousness, and ignorance of the scriptures; have, from generation to generation, been carefully handed down. Whilst all the world assented to them, as traditions of gracious men, taking it for granted, without impartial inquiry, that they were deducible from scripture.

This, by degrees, rendered the things belonging to our peace so intricate, that the knowledge thereof was considered as wholly confined to the schools. And hence it was, that when a man believed the gospel report concerning Jesus Christ, namely, that he was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, that he died, and rose again for our justification: I say, when a man had believed this, he was yet taught to inquire, how do I know whether he died for me? whether I am interested in him or not? was I sure, says one, that I am predestinate, I could be easy: says another, was I but sufficiently convinced, and humbled, I could believe that Christ died for me: says a third, could I but perceive the fruits of the spirit in me, the proper effects and obedience of faith, I could be assured of my interest in him.

Thus, are mankind taught to establish their own righteousness: where, upon the authority of some goodness wrought by them, or found in them, they are directed to conclude of the love of God towards them, and of their personal interest in Christ. But what shall that man do, who is assured that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually, Gen. vi. 5; whose goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away, Hos. vi. 10; and that he is an unclean thing, and all his righteousness as filthy rags? Isaiah lxiv. 6. I say, what shall the man do, who by deep experience every day and hour, is sensible of those awful truths, and knows them applicable to every child of man? who has a continual sense of his poverty, misery, blindness, and nakedness? According to the forementioned traditions, he must despair, and be damned everlastingly; for those traditions say, it will avail him nothing to believe all that the Bible reports of Jesus Christ, if he has not good works, good fruits in himself, as more corroborating evidences, more infallible recommendations unto God, yea, as more undeniable marks of his acceptance with him, than Jesus Christ: than his birth, life, sufferings death, resurrection, and ascension. Let us only compare those conclusions with the scriptures, and we shall quickly perceive them to be the very sinews of Antichrist.

The apostle says, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15. But Antichrist says you cannot be saved, except you are holy, and good in yourself; nor shall the death and resurrection of Jesus profit you, except you are changed, and made fruitful in all good works, words, and thoughts. The scripture saith, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. vi. But Antichrist saith that Christ doth not justify the ungodly; and that he justifies only such who are godly: who are repentant, humble, meek, loving righteousness, and hating iniquity. And where the fore-cited text shews us, that Christ's faith is accounted for righteousness, to all such who working not, believeth on him, as justifying the ungodly: Antichrist says, you are justified by your own faith, which will produce righteousness in you, to evidence it. The scriptures say, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, Rom. v. 8; and that when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, ver. 10; and that

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Cor. v. 19. But Antichrist saith, sinners have no right to conclude that Christ died for them; that such who have this right, are distinguished from sinners by inherent holiness and gracious qualities. And it farther saith, in contradiction to Christ, that he did not reconcile us to God when we were enemies, but that we must love him, fear him, and serve him, before we can be said to be reconciled to him; and as to man's being reconciled by the death of Jesus, it absolutely denies that; and says, we are reconciled by being reformed, changed, and made conformable in heart and practice to God; and that until then, it is not true that God hath reconciled us unto himself in Christ, notwithstanding the apostle saith it. The scriptures say, that we are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts xv. 11; yea, expressly, "by grace are ye saved." Eph. ii. 8. But Antichrist says, there are terms and conditions to be complied with and fulfilled, before you can be saved. The apostle saith, that God hath "given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: and that he who believeth not this record, hath made God a liar." John v. 10, 11.

From whence it is plain, that he who believeth not, hath eternal life given him in the Son of God, as fully as him who believeth: else it doth not appear how he could make God a liar, by not believing; nor, how the unbeliever can be censured for not believing what was not true. But Antichrist says, all have not a right to believe: some because they are not predestinate, others because not qualified, by repentance, &c. others though they have believed, have no right to be assured, because they are not sufficiently fruitful: Therefore those cannot make God a liar, when they believe not, it being not required of them to believe a falsehood. Our Saviour censured such who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: But Antichrist supports this character, and is constantly for distinguishing between saints and sinners, and that not from any rejoicing in Jesus Christ, which one hath above the other, but from the saints being more righteous than the sinners, more holy, devout, and wise. Our Saviour reproved the church of Laodicea, in the sharpest manner, for growing rich, and increasing in goods, for not retaining a just sense of her poverty, misery, blindness, and nakedness: But Antichrist says, you must increase in goods, you must grow rich, rich in wisdom, knowledge, holiness, goodness, virtue, and experience: and except you thus increase in goods, Christ shall profit you nothing. You was poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, says Antichrist, but not so now, you are converted, you are born again, you are changed, therefore how should you know yourself to be what you are not, *now* however, whatever you *have* been. The spirit of truth says, Christ is made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Yea, saith Antichrist, but except you are made this in yourselves, you cannot be saved. Thus the traditions of man, make void the word of God; and thus Antichrist warreth against Jesus, the son of Mary. This is that Antichrist, whose coming was prophesied of, and who made his appearance, as early as the days of the apostles. He ruined the labours of Paul, in Galatia, and made him complain that all they who were in Asia, were turned away from him: insomuch, that this apostle, laborious, and zealous for the glory of Jesus Christ, lived to see sundry of the Churches, whom he had espoused to one husband, as a chaste virgin to Christ, overrun and spoiled by Antichrist. And indeed this, and what followed, was foretold by him, in his epistle to the Thessalonians, where he said: The day of Christ should not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. It is easily seen, that this prediction is fulfilled. John also said, that Antichrist was in the world then, denying that Jesus was come in the flesh: Or, as it signifies, that he had finished the redemption of mankind; and consequently, taught men to look for him yet to come, in their flesh: under the notion of light, power, wisdom, faithfulness, humility, love, &c. From the appearance of this Antichrist in the world, we may date the era of the apostacy, or falling away from the apostles' doctrine; when mankind began to entangle each other, with their own inventions. The apostles, as I have hinted, preached the person of Christ, the simple facts of his death and resurrection, as justification and forgiveness of sins to the children of Adam. It was enough, that their hearers believed their report of the crucified one: and as I observed before, the persons thus believing, never once questioned but it was for them, because hitherto, they had not been taught that any were excluded from it. Antichrist had not as yet the boldness to affirm, that there were some amongst mankind, who though they heard of the death, and resurrection, of the Lord Jesus, yea, though they believed it, yet had no right to conclude it was for them. Nor had he as yet propagated that subtle distinction, between the belief of the truth, and knowledge of their personal interest therein. For in those days of undisguised truth, and simplicity, when any man believed the testimony of the apostles concerning Jesus, his heart exulted in the truth, nothing doubtful of his interest therein. The belief of the truth, and the purged conscience, were then inseparable. For the testimony is, not only that Christ died, and rose again, such as we might hear of some other person, as Lazarus: but the truth is, that he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification: insomuch, that believing the truth, necessarily implies the knowledge of our personal interest in Christ, the latter, is always in proportion to the former. To distinguish between the belief of the truth, and the knowledge of our interest therein, is the invention of a spirit, who professing Christianity, would not be thought to be an unbeliever, but at the same time, having not the testimony of a good

conscience, the inward witness, which the scriptures affirm to be the case with such who believe: but still retaining a conscience of sin, he was obliged to scheme this distinction to keep up his credit as a believer, but such a one as was doubtful of his personal interest in the truth believed. Yea, and to ward off all censure on this account, this doubtfulness must be nourished, and cherished, and strongly recommended to others, as prudent religious fear; from which we are very rarely to be delivered; and that only in proportion to our fruitfulness, as the effects of the truth believed. And to make this the more plausible, it is insinuated that the greatest danger lies on the side of a confident believing; signifying, that men are rather damned for believing, (which is called presuming) than for doubting: Thus from every quarter, Antichrist aims by his traditions, at making void the word of God. It is very surprising to observe, after a person hath made a great bustle about Christ, and raised a dust, by proposing a truth to be believed, unclogged with any conditions whatsoever in the person believing; requiring no other qualification in him, than what is naturally common to mankind; and that the truth which is thus to be believed, is none other than the simple fact of Christ's death and resurrection: I say, after proposing this, and quarrelling with all the world about it, giving the hardest names, even unto such, who only differed unhappily in the mode of expression; to find such a one sink to this, that a man may believe the forecited truth, and not know his interest in it; yea, have no interest at all in it: and that such who have can only know it by their fruits, gives us a striking prospect of Antichristian policy, and makes us suspect the intention, where it is proposed to exalt Christ alone. The Scriptures assure us that mankind as sinners, are interested in the death and resurrection of Christ: Therefore to appehend and believe that truth properly, is to believe our personal interest in him. If it should be objected, that Christ doth not now say to any individual, thy sins are forgiven thee; I answer, he doth: for what he said unto one, he saith unto every one who believeth it: otherwise, we may say there is nothing in the Scriptures said unto us; the Old Testament being written unto the Jews; the New Testament, some to one Church, and some to another, but none to us: if we have not a right to believe that what Christ said unto them, he said unto us; but, that we can only know our interest in Christ by our fruits; is first a denial of the witness of the spirit: except it is supposed that he bears witness by those things, and not by Christ: which by the way, is to speak of himself, and prove himself a spirit of error. Again, it is to make our goodness essential to the knowledge of our Salvation, which is a manifest going about to establish our own righteousness, as the medium at least whereby we believe; and a contradiction to the Scripture: which saith, to him who worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Again, it makes void the law: by not adhering to its determination, concerning good and evil: for were we always to determine of our good and evil by the perfect law, it would be much more easy, with the greatest pretender to piety, to number his good fruits, than it is to find them. Was this but truly considered amongst mankind, we should not have such proud boastings, and pretensions to know this, and the other matter, by their good works, and holy fruits, as we have in the world. I might say, it smells much stronger of the Church of Rome, (if it does not look a little towards Deism) than of the Protestant faith; but as that would be saying nothing, to such who think the Romish faith true, and the Protestant wrong; I shall content myself with saying, that it is a flat contradiction of the apostle's testimony; as I have in part, and shall yet farther shew: though it would fain shelter itself under their authority. Where those, and the like suggestions of antichrist take place in any heart, the consequences are shocking: as to such who are vain enough, to imagine themselves fruitful in themselves, and from thence to draw conclusions: as they must first make to themselves a new law, before they can thus think: so must they of necessity be puffed up, and come into the character of the self-righteous. And, as to such who are not sufficiently vain, to think themselves less fruitful, as they cannot know their interest in Christ, there remains naught for them, but misery and fear: though they have this consolation, to be taught that unbelief and gloom, is a much less dangerous state, than an unshaken confidence. It is easily seen, that those propositions are calculated to multiply and increase the perplexities, doubts, and objections of mankind, against the gospel of Jesus: therefore is it, that we have many more of those in the world now, than in the first ages of Christianity.

The apostles preached Jesus and his benefits, promiscuously to sinners, and did not straiten his grace, by shewing that there were some who had no right to it; either from their being reprobated, or from their being unqualified; but by divine authority, they preached the gospel to every creature, and every man who was a sinner, yea whether he knew himself such or not, (for they spake of things as true with God, and not according to the conceptions of man) was sufficiently qualified, and had an indisputable right, to conclude the Saviour's death, and resurrection, his justification unto life. And this much is to be understood by the apostle's assertions, we preach Christ crucified. And again, we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord: And with great power, gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all. And again, he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. Thus, the apostles dwelt altogether upon the fact of Christ's death and resurrection, amongst Jews and Greeks, as the alone salvation of mankind. And what Paul himself thought of it, is evident from that heart-exultation of his. Who is he that condemneth, it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again: Thus the resurrection of Jesus, without the consideration of any other matter, in heaven or in earth,

was the joy of his heart; yea, all his hope, and all his salvation. He shewed, that the fact of Christ's resurrection, was his exemption from condemnation: He viewed it, and rejoiced in it as such. And without doubt, what he apprehended to be truth, he preached unto others, as he sought not himself, in the things which he spake: the glory of the Lord Jesus, and the happiness of his fellow-creatures, being that, which he had always in view, in preaching the kingdom of God. As to mankind, the apostles thought them sufficiently qualified, (as being all concluded under sin) for the grace which they preached. They were taught to drop all distinctions, and no longer to consider men as clean, and unclean, as chosen, and rejected: for saith Peter, the Lord hath shewed me, that I should not call any man common or unclean. This was not because mankind were reformed, and better now, than when God taught the Jews to respect the Gentiles as common and unclean, which he did under the law; where he forbid the Jews to have any connexion with the Gentiles; and, if it was not owing to any change in the Gentiles, that they were now received, and were no longer to be considered as common and unclean: The query is, what was it owing to? I answer, it was unto the death and resurrection of Jesus: for it was there that God had cleansed them. Therefore was it, that when Peter refused to eat, in the vision of the sheet; saying, nothing that was unclean, had at any time come into his mouth: he was answered: call not thou that common and unclean which God hath cleansed. Thus was he taught, that mankind, who in themselves were unclean, were cleansed of God, in Christ Jesus: according to which cleansing, he was instructed to respect them; and that he ought not any more to call any man common or unclean. Therefore, it was the business of the Apostles, to tell the people what God had done for them: Namely, that he had loved them and washed them from their sins, in his own blood. Thus as to matter, and manner, did the first witnesses of Jesus preach his salvation unto the children of men. For where they tell us, that they preached the Son of God; that they preached Christ Jesus the Lord, Christ crucified, &c. without meddling with the characters and conditions of those unto whom they preached, to point them out, as qualified, or unqualified for the reception of the truth. I say this, their matter, and manner of preaching, plainly shews, that they did not aim at making a schism in the body; by dividing the head and members, as having separate interests: but, they aimed at shewing that the interest of the head, was that of the members: therefore was it, that holding the head, they constantly preached his excellence, his labours, triumphs, and honours: that the people as his members, hearing of it, might hear of their own salvation and grace: because, the glory which is given unto him, as the head, he gives it to us, as his members. From this union, it appears, that hearing and believing of Christ, according to the apostle's testimony, we hear and believe, what truly relates unto ourselves. And thus did they, by preaching the obedience, death, resurrection, and ascension, of the Lord Jesus, preach the salvation of mankind in him: Thus, lifting him up, that he might draw all men unto him, and that they might espouse the people unto this one husband, as chaste virgins unto this Jesus, they were cautious of meddling with the characters of their hearers; as Jews, or Gentiles, as repentant or unrepentant, lest by making a distinction, those who thought themselves on the favourable side of the question, should be lifted up, and their minds be adulterated, and rendered unchaste to the crucified one: Nay, they had always caustics at hand, for the proud flesh of their disciples, wherever they saw it rising: and this they applied without fear, or having the persons of men in respect, whenever they saw occasion. And how careful Paul was in this particular, appears from his reproving Peter, for giving the least occasion to the Jews to glory in the flesh, and keep up a distinction, which God had before shewn him an end of; where he actually forbade him to call that common, and unclean, which he had cleansed.

This is a short specimen of the apostle's matter and manner of preaching: and according to my apprehension, it is obvious that they had the union between Christ and the people in view, when they thus preached.

There are many who respect the epistles, written by the apostles to the Churches, as a pattern of their preaching: but they are to consider, that there is a wide difference between private letters, written unto such who already believed on the Lord Jesus, wherein there is promiscuously thrown out such hints, as were designed to establish their faith, and form their manners. I say, a real difference between those, and their manner of preaching in public, where having to do with the multitude, their only subject was the person, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus: of which their sermons recorded in the Acts of the apostles, are instances. But since then there has been a great falling away, and the man of sin is revealed. And, as it is more than probable that the day of Christ is at hand, antichrist hath great wrath, and strives to the utmost extent of his power and cunning, to hinder the revival of the apostolic testimony, and the rising of the witnesses. Sometimes he seeks to establish his own maxims, under the popular names of virtue, benevolence, repentance, faith, fruitfulness, &c. Then he calumniates the testimony of Jesus, giving it the most opprobrious characters, and mad with rage against all the witnesses thereof, breathes forth nothing but slaughter and threatenings. And many are they, whom he either prevails on to adopt his maxims, and become his willing disciples; or so intimidates with his threatenings, that they dare not embrace the truth, because of the certain reproach that follows. But let him rage, he has but a short time, ere the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming: and then shall the witnesses who now lie slain in the streets of the great city, stand again upon their feet; and the ancient testimony be revived.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus: make no long tarrying. O my God.

THE FIRST TRANSGRESSION.

BY THOMAS F. KING.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."—GEN. iii. 4.

In the second chapter of Genesis, we read, (v. 15, 16, 17.) that 'the Lord God took the man, and put him unto the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' And in the commencement of the succeeding chapter it is said, 'Now, the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shalt not eat of every tree in the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die.'

It must be confessed that this account has been made the occasion of some of the wildest and most extravagant fancies that the human imagination ever conceived. We do not mean that the sacred historian taught extravagant fancies in his narrative; but that mankind have so distorted and perverted his facts, as to turn them into the greatest imaginable nonsense. In the first place, it should be recollected, they have infinitely exaggerated the threatening in which God announced the penalty attached to the law, under which he placed our original parents. Have they not perseveringly asserted that the threatened punishment was death temporal, spiritual and eternal? If the reader is at all acquainted with the creeds, or preaching, or religious conversation of the popular class of professors, he knows that such is their constant, not to say obstinate, declaration. But on a subject of so much importance, we trust we may be allowed to demand the authority for our being required to believe that Adam was threatened with eternal misery. One thing we know: that in the account which Moses has given of the first transgression, there is not a particle of evidence that such a penalty was annexed to the violation of the law. Without meaning to treat with contempt or with hostility, we defy, in direct terms, any man to point out, there, even a shadow of intimation to that purport. All that Moses records of the threatening, is simply this: 'in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' Why, then, should webe required to believe ina punishment, which our heavenly Father has not announced to his creatures?

But, in the second place, there is another opinion which has widely prevailed, in relation to this passage of scripture, and which we regard as equally visionary and equally false, with that just examined. Who would have thought, from what Moses has said in this connexion, that a mighty fallen angel had any agency in the seduction of the first human pair? He has made not the least mention of such a being; nor has he given the most distant hint or allusion from which we could infer his belief in the monster. If there were such a being, who had stirred up rebellion in heaven, suffered a memorable defeat, and been thence thrust down to hell, but who had afterwards managed matters so adroitly as to enter into the serpent, and under this mask to wreak his spite on the unsuspecting parents of mankind, is it not very strange that Moses should pass over the whole affair in profound silence? If such things had been, as is commonly supposed, he must have been as well acquainted with them, as mankind are at the present day; and since there is no roason why he should have industriously kept them secret, we regard his silence concerning them as proof that he had no knowledge of such incredible events.

In our apprehension, there never was a clearer case than this. It certainly becomes those who are in the habit of palming these extravagant fancies on the credulity of the public, to pause and consider the injury they are likely to inflict on the cause of Christianity, by continuing the practice. A reasonable man cannot believe representations which oppose the common sense that God has given him. For various motives, he may not openly disavow belief in the chimeras; but we may depend upon it, that he will cherish his unbelief in secret, and extend it probably to the Bible, in which, he is told, the absurdities originate. The nonsense of the popular systems of divinity, has done more to increase the ranks of infidelity, than all the writings of the professed enemies of our religion. Universalists have done, and are still doing, more to rescue Christianity from the attacks of unbelievers, than any class of those who maintain the prevailing doctrines of the day. This may be called egotism; but it is matter of fact and sober experience.

As we have no faith in the existence of a fallen angel, and as the common opinion is, that such a being was the principal, indeed the sole, agent in the temptation of our first parents, it may, perhaps, be demanded what we understand by the serpent which Moses mentions. We answer with all readiness, that it appears to be, in this instance, a metaphorical term, by which the inspired historian would signify to us, the carnal or vicious propensities in human nature. These constitute, in our judgment, what may be properly and emphatically denominated *the tempter*. Our authority for this explanation, is not only the testimony of the universal experience of mankind, but the language also of the scriptures. In the first chapter of St. James' Epistle, we read, 'Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God can-

not be tempted with evil; neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.' (v. 13, 14, 15.) The same doctrine, substantially, is taught in the fourth chapter of this epistle: 'From whence came wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?' (v. 1.) Why did he not attribute all this to the suggestions and influence of a fallen angel? Again: in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul says, 'We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin, that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin, that dwelleth in me. I find, then, a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (v. 14–24.) Here, St. Paul appears to describe the reflections of a man who is striving against the current of sinful inclinations; and we perceive that he places the whole force of temptation in the vicious propensities of human nature, which he calls a law in the members warring against the law of the mind. Let it now be remembered that St. James teaches that this is the ground on which every man is tempted. So that, if there were, indeed, such a mighty fallen angel as is commonly imagined, his influence and services would be altogether superseded by the irregular and turbulent passions of mankind. He would be an utterly useless piece of machinery in the conduct of human life. Those who properly govern their appetites and passions, he could not, of course, lead astray; and those who neglect this precaution, would wander without his assistance.

Having thus stated our views of what is signified by the *serpent* which beguiled Eve, and shown that it must have been the carnal mind, which, according to St. Paul, is enmity against God,—is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be,—we come next to inquire, why this tempter is represented as uttering the declaration, 'Ye shall not surely die.' In eastern countries, even to this day, abstract principles and passions are frequently personified; and in accordance with this style of writing, the principle of evil, or that which has the power to entice men from the way of rectitude, is here described under the figure of a serpent: the most odious of reptiles, and yet the most fascinating. By no better emblem, could temptation have been represented. It is indeed a serpent. To pursue the metaphor,—he coils himself around the unsuspecting sinner with the utmost caution, till in a favourable moment, he fixes his fangs in the infatuated victim. The deed is done; and the poison is left to effect the work of death. The history of his operations with Eve, is the faithful record of his success with her numerous sons and daughters. He began by suggesting doubts respecting the propriety of the divine prohibition; and finding her disposed to listen to these insinuations, he proceeded boldly to deny the consequence which Deity had declared should result from the transgression of his law. 'Ye shall not surely die,' said he. But let it be remembered —let it never be forgotten—that this old serpent has always been a deceiver. He established this character in Eden; and he retains it still. Our first parents soon discovered his delusion; for on the very day of their transgression, they actually experienced the death which the unerring word of Jehovah had threatened. Had they escaped, had the punishment been either remitted or delayed, then indeed the declaration of the serpent would have been verified, and the denunciation of the true and living God proved false.

In our opinion, every man, from the first to the last, comes into the world under moral circumstances precisely the same. We are ushered into being in the state of perfect innocency, with no guilt or vice, whatsoever; and from all that we can learn, this was the condition of the parents of our race, when they came from the forming hands of their Creator. We know it is often said that Adam was created perfectly *holy*, as well as innocent: but the absurdity of this proposition will be manifest, when we consider, that *holiness* is the result of correct moral action, and that Adam could not have begun to perform such actions, till after he was created. He was innocent, until he yielded to the solicitations of his deceived partner, and ate of the forbidden fruit. Then, his innocence forsook him, and he felt in his soul the bitterness of spiritual death. St. Paul, says, 'to be carnally minded is death;' and this 'death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'

In conclusion, we would remark, that there never was a more groundless charge urged against any class of men, than that which is so often repeated against the advocates of Universalism, viz. that they are propagating the doctrine which the serpent taught in the garden of Eden. And who, we ask, are they that fondly deal in this slander? Why, those that tell us with great vehemence, that if they believed God would save all mankind, they would throw off every moral restraint, and sin with a high hand and an outstretched arm. Perhaps they are not aware that in betraying such sentiments, they lay themselves open to a suspicion of being, themselves, somewhat enamoured of the serpent's doctrine. If they did not think that sin is, in itself, to be desired,' and that it would contribute to their happiness 'in the day' they indulged therein, they would have no wish to practice it, whether Universalism were true or false.

THE

RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS:

OR

A VINDICATION

OF THE

GOODNESS AND GRACE OF GOD,

TO BE MANIFESTED AT LAST, IN THE RECOVERY OF HIS WHOLE CREATION OUT OF THEIR FALL.

BY JEREMIAH WHITE,

CHAPLAIN TO OLIVER CROMWELL.

THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people."—*Rev.* xiv. 6.

PHILADELPHIA:

GIHON, FAIRCHILD & Co.

1844.

PREFACE.

THERE may possibly need something by way of apology, for putting out a book of this kind, especially in an age so profligate; and it may by some be looked upon as a design to promote *libertinism*, and concur with the aim and end of too many writers of these times, under pretence of religion to undermine it at the root: but I doubt not but the seriousness and solidity with which this subject is managed, the zeal for the glory of God, the vindication of his most glorious attributes, and the earnest endeavours for promoting the love of God and charity to all mankind, which all along appear so conspicuous in this work, will soon convince the reader that there is a design of the utmost *service* to religion at the bottom; and that rather by a new topic of persuasion to bring in proselytes to the kingdom of grace, than to drive any from it.

With relation to God, it cannot but be an acceptable service to represent him in his most amiable excellencies, and vindicate the supereminence of his *love*, which is his nature, and the full latitude of his *mercy* and *goodness* towards his creatures, which has had a cloud or *veil* of darkness drawn over it in the minds of the generality of mankind; so that it has shown out less amiably, and less powerfully convincing and commanding the hearts and affections of men, and giving occasion to many that have been strong in the faculty of reasoning, and have taken their notions of God rather from thence than from the Scriptures, as translated and glossed upon, and represented according to the schemes and systems of these latter ages, by reason of the many inconsistencies therein, to throw off all *revealed* religion, and own only a God in such manner as can be proved by human reason; and others that have less consideration and use of that talent, through their immersion into sense, have hence had too great encouragement and too great arguments for atheism and libertinism itself. And those that would convince them upon the common hypotheses have wanted also their greatest arguments to prevail upon them. One instance I shall give, which I have been well informed of, and that is in the late *Earl of Rochester*; in the midst of all his extravagancies, both of opinion and practice: he was once in company with the author of this treatise, who discoursing with him about religion and the Being of a God, took the opportunity to display the goodness of God in its full latitude, according to the scheme laid down in this his present work; upon which the earl returned him for answer, "That he could approve of and like such a God as he had represented." So far was he from drawing any encouragement for his loose principles from hence, that on this supposition he gave up the cause. And thus we may see how, with relation to mankind, if God were truly represented in the infinity of his grace and goodness, and the authority of those other schemes which give his justice so great a prevalency over his mercy, were rebated or taken off, many that can stand the shock or terrors of the common preaching of eternal wrath and damnation, or a hell-fire without end, might yet be reclaimed by the manifestation of the goodness of God when they should come to see, or understand it as it is. For *love is strongest*, and in its own nature most powerful to attract and to persuade. And therefore when it is objected, this doctrine ought not to be broached in a licentious age, apt to take hold of all occasions of encouragement: we must turn back the argument upon the objectors, and tell them, therefore there is need of greater strength and argument for persuasion; that the best wine at last should be drawn out, and the full strength of the love in its turn and season should be superadded to the strength of justice and judgment for influence upon the minds of men.

It may be yet said, "Supposing this doctrine to be true, that in the opinion of several that have held it, it ought to be kept as a secret, among such as may be fit to receive it, and not publicly exposed?" To this I answer,

1. 'Tis true, *Origen* himself says so: but this is not to be understood of writing upon the subject, for that he did himself most freely; but rather for the general conduct of our conversation, not to expose the mysteries of religion to such as could not receive them. But,

2. There is a *time* for all things. There is a time when all secrets are to be revealed and proclaimed upon the house tops. And this is in the latter day, in which WISDOM is to manifest herself, and knowledge to increase as the waters that cover the sea: Isa. ix. 11. See also Dan. *ult.* iv. 10. Yea, this very secret has its proper time to be revealed; as 1 Tim. ii. 6. i. e. "To be testified in due time."—And when is it, that this pouring out of knowledge is expected to be, and the manifestations of the hidden wisdom of God, but in the preparation or entrances of the blessed times of refreshment from the presence of the Lord, in his next or latter day advent, i. e. to his millennial kingdom; of which we hear the alarms at this very day, from all quarters and all parties; from such as have been students of the prophetic writers, or heedful observers of the signs of the times. As then in this very age, we have found many running to and fro, and knowledge increased,

so we may expect it will be yet much more so.

The occasion of our author's writing upon this subject is so very singular, that I believe some account thereof will be both acceptable and useful to such as shall incline to look into it. When he was at the University, and had studied all the schemes of divinity, he could not find from any, or from all of them together, that God was *good*, that God was *love*, as the Scriptures declare of him. This put him into a great dissatisfaction and perplexity of mind, from which he could no way extricate himself; but it grew upon him more and more, till it threw him into a fit of sickness, and that so dangerous that there was no hope of his recovery; but in it, at the most, he had a beam of divine grace darted upon his intellect, with a sudden, warm, and lively *impression*; which gave him immediately a new set of thoughts concerning God and his works, and the way of his dealing with his offending creatures, which, as they became the rule and standard of all his thoughts and measures of things afterwards, as I have heard him declare, so they gave in particular, the ground and occasion of this present design. And upon this he presently recovered. This, as reasonably may be supposed, might give occasion to an expression of greater freedom in his title, as he at first intended it; which we have taken the liberty to omit, lest any might stumble at it; yet the reader will find it mentioned by him in the book.

He had wrote at first more voluminously, but towards the latter end of his life he was busied in contracting and preparing it for the public service; in which he was more particularly taken up, and so brought it to a conclusion, a little before his death.

His *character* is great, and has been more than once given to the world in print; though on account of the offence many will be apt to take at the subject, it has been thought fit here to conceal his name.

He goes indeed upon the *predestinarian hypothesis*, as will appear in several passages of his work; but by his additional scheme makes it quite another thing, and entirely evacuates it as the severer part. But if any inured to other schemes of divinity are yet unsatisfied in this, they may take his general hypothesis of the restoration, and graft it upon their own, and it will suit as well; and serve to rectify and improve it, as it has done this.

There are many indeed that run so far in magnifying the method God has taken for manifestation of his grace and mercy towards his fallen creatures, as to imagine their fall was needed in order to the perfect display of the wonders of his goodness. Indeed there is something of a particular and partial manifestation accidentally made through the objects of mercy, rendered so by their sin and folly: but surely God needed not this accident to show that grace which was contained in, and but as a part of his essential goodness; and which might by the enlightened eye be contemplated therein; or by the works of God, and manifestation of himself, he exhibited to full view by the direct pencil of the divine wisdom, which operates all in perfect unity and harmony, and wants not the breach or division of the properties of nature in any degree of disproportion and disharmony, or of real contrariety in order to its own perfect product. And the accidental illustration of grace by sin and sufferings; seems to be chiefly in the passage through the vale of misery, or the first sensation of those that are admitted to the heavenly enjoyments, which without these extraneous and accessory excitements, go on increasing and multiplying without bound or end, from their own *eternal motives* and incentives; from the ground of the eternal and infinite fulness and perfection of the Godhead, as moving in its own harmonious unity, proceeding and manifesting itself, of itself, and by itself, in all harmonious variety; and that without any such thing as a defective foil; which has rather been an offence or impediment of its glory, only as this has, and still does, like the sun, break through the fog and discover itself.

In this work the author has gone only upon *Scripture* grounds; and yet from the Scriptures which he has produced and discoursed at large upon, he has sufficiently absolved the *rational* part. And for further confirmation, it has been thought fit here to add some testimonies both ancient and modern to this great point; and they are as follow.

Origen is well known to be the great propagator of this doctrine, so that it might seem scarce needful to make citation from him to this purpose, yet as a leader of others, I shall here set him in the front, with a testimony or two. We find then, this learned father, *Origen in fine Lib. 8vi. Explanat in Epist. ad Rom.* declaring himself after this manner:* "But he that despises the purificaitons of the Word of God, and the doctrine of the Gospel, is reserved for those dreadful and penal purifications afterwards; that so he may be purged by the fire and torment of hell, who would not receive purgation from the apostolic doctrine and evangelical word, according to that which is written of being 'purified by fire.' But how long this purification which is wrought out by penal fire shall endure, or for how many periods or ages it shall detain sinful souls in torment, he only knows to whom all judgment is committed by the Father."

And then, upon the same place and subject, he adds: "But we must still remember that the apostle would have this text accounted as a mystery, so as that the faithful and perfect ones may keep its secret sense among themselves, and not ordinarily divulge it to the imperfect and less capable of receiving it."

The next I shall cite, (and indeed who might have disputed precedency with the former, as being *Origen's* master, though less noted on this account) is Clemens Alexan-

* [In this as well as in all the following references, we have omitted the passages as they occur in the original Latin or Greek, and have simply given the translations as they appear in the preface. Those who wish to consult the original can doubtless obtain the works from which the quotations are made.]

DRINUS; *Adumbrat. in Ep.* 1. *Johan.* printed at the end of his treatise, *Quis Dives Salvetur*, where he has these words:—"The Lord is not (says he, v. 2.) a propitiation for our sins only, that is, of the faithful, but also for the whole world. Therefore he indeed saves all universally; but some as converted by punishments, others by voluntary submission. And hence he obtains the honour and dignity, that to Him every knee shall bow, both of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, that is, angels, and men, and souls departed this life before his coming into the world.

Another is GREGORY NAZIANZEN. He tells us, *Paris* Edit. 1630. *Orat. Quadrag. Pag.* 664, 665,—"There is another fire, not for purging but for punishing; whether it be of that kind by which *Sodom* was destroyed, or whether that prepared for the devil, or that which proceeds before the face of the Lord [*at his last advent*], or lastly, which is most formidable of all, that which is conjoined with the worm that never dieth, which is not quenched, but burns perpetually upon the wicked. All these are of a destructive nature. If yet we are not even here [*in the last kind of fire*] to understand it more mildly [*or with greater philanthropy or love to mankind*] and more worthy of [*or, suitable to the nature of*] Him that punishes."

We have for another testimony, from GREGORY NYSSENUS. *In Dial. de Anima and Resurrect. Paris Edit.* 1659.—"For 'tis wholly and absolutely needful that evil should be removed out of the circle of being. For since evil is of that nature, that it cannot be without a will and purpose of its own; and since all will and arbitrement is in [and of right belongs to] God; how can it be otherwise, but that the evil must be entirely abolished, so that nothing shall remain that can be a receptacle of it." And again in his Catechetical Oration, chap. xxvi, p. 517, 'tis said of Christ, "Who is He that delivers man from evil, and who heals the inventor [or author] of evil himself."

SULPICIUS SEVERUS, *De Vita* B. Martini, *p.* 488. Edit. *Lugd. Bat.* 1647. "If thou, O miserable one, [speaking to the devil] would cease from the temptation and persecution of man, and repent thee of thy facts, even at this time of day when the judgment is so near at hand; I myself could with true assurance [or confidence] in God, promise thee the mercy of Christ."

This testimony, if it does not absolutely conclude for the point, yet it does against the so great difficulty and impossibility of it, which is by some supposed; and vindicates the good will of God, as all being ready, and nothing wanting on his part for the salvation of all his creatures. That which follows may likewise be of use to show the gentleness and tenderness wherewith the propagators of this doctrine have been received, and serve to open the narrowness, and allay the severity and rigidness of spirit, with which they are treated by many at this day: as also to shew that in the times of the latter, as well as elder fathers, there was still a reserve in the Church, of vindicators of the great love of God and latitude of his grace. 'Tis from St. Austin, as follows.

AUGUSTIN. *De Civ. Dei*, lib. xxi. cap. 17. "And now I see I must have to do with our merciful men, and must dispute with them gently and peaceably, who either will not believe everlasting punishment to be inflicted on those whom the just Judge shall condemn to the pains of hell; or at least not on all of them: but that after certain periods of time, longer or shorter, according to the proportion of their crimes, they shall be delivered of that state."

St. JEROME, at the end of his comment on *Isaiah*, speaks thus, concerning the opinion that hell torments shall have an end; though he himself was persuaded in and believed the eternity of the torments of devils and Atheists. "Which (matter) we ought to leave to the wisdom of God alone, whose judgments as well as his mercies are in weight and measure, and who well knows whom, or how, or for how long he ought to judge them."

I shall conclude these testimonies of the fathers with that of FACUNDUS, *Episcop. Hermiensis*, lib. iv. cap. 4. pag. 62. *Edit. Paris.* 1679. "In the book which DOMITIAN, Bishop of Ancyra, wrote to Vigilius, he is found complaining of those that contradicted the doctrines of Origen, which maintained that the souls of men pre-existed in a state of happiness before they came into bodies; and that all those that were doomed to the eternal punishment, shall, together with the devil and his angels, be restored to their former state of blessedness." And after this he adds, "They have rashly run out to anathematize the most holy and most glorious doctors, (or teachers of the Church) on occasion of those doctrines that have been advanced concerning the pre-existence, and the restitution of all things. And this indeed under pretext of Origen, but thereby anathematizing all the (great) saints which were before him, and which have been after him." Thus have we the declaration and testimonies of two of the ancient fathers and bishops of the Church in one.

This is a taste of those numerous testimonies of the ancients to the truth of this doctrine; and those of the moderns are yet more numerous. There have been several books written on this subject in *French*, in the *High Dutch*, and the *Low Dutch*; and particularly in the *High German* by the learned Dr. Jo. W. Petersen, sometime Superintendent of Lunenburgh, at large in folio; where he has strenuously defended this point, and collected and adopted into his work the writings of several others upon this subject in lesser tracts: 'tis called *The Restitution of all Things*. There is also an ingenious piece written in *French* by a noble eminent lord and minister of the court of the King of Prussia, intitled, *Entretiens sur la Restitution Universelle de la Creation*: or, *A Conference upon the Universal Restitution of the Creation*, betwixt Dositheus and Theophilus. But to collect testimonies from all these would make a volume instead of a preface: therefore I shall content myself with producing a few testimonies from some of the learned or curious en-

quirers into this subject, some more, some less, that have been of our own nation.

Gerard Winstanley, in his book *Of the Mystery of God, &c. p.* 9, printed 1649, declares thus: "Therefore I say the mystery of God is thus: God will bruise this serpent's head, and cast the murtherer out of heaven, [i. e. of] the human nature where it dwells in part.—And he will dwell in that whole creation in time, and so deliver whole mankind out of their fall."

There is another treatise called *The Church Triumphant:* or, *A comfortable Treatise of the Amplitude and Largeness of* Christ's *Kingdom*; wherein is proved by Scripture and reason, that the number of the damned is inferior to that of the elect. By *Joseph Alford*, M. A. sometime fellow of *Oriel College*, Oxford. Printed *An.* 1644. The title-page of which being so full, I shall omit any further quotation from the book.

There is also a book written by *R. Stafford*, entitled, *Some Thoughts of the Life to come*, &c. Printed *Anno* 1693, in which this doctrine is notably asserted. We find here, p. 52, &c.—"So that let satan do his worst, as it is proverbially and truly said, *God is above the devil*; so his knowledge doth as much exceed the other, (who is a creature and by him made) as the whole ocean a single drop of water. In the 1st and 2d chapters of Job, and the 2d of Zechariah, and in Rev. xii. 10; we see and understand God's superlative and over-ruling goodness and equity; how he doth moderate the matter, and affirm it by the way of favour and mercy on the side of mankind. And this but as talking a little before the day of assize, an emblem and forerunner, how he will determine it eternally on their side, at the last and great day of judgment, notwithstanding all the informations, accusations and aggravations of Satan. And now if there should be any————who draw up more heavy and false inditement than the true and very nature of the thing doth require and will bear: or if the conscience itself (which is yet more) pressed with sin and guilt, should forecast too grievous things: all this will not do one jot of harm in the day of the Lord; for He who hath prepared his throne for judgment knows all things:—"With righteousness will he judge the world, and the people with equity. Psalm lxxxix. 9. Now *equity* is a mild thing, which doth state, moderate, and adjust a matter. And then after all, God doth reserve *mercy*, even *after judgment* and condemnation: for *that* is its *proper place*."

And afterwards, p. 55.—"But God only knows what may succeed after all this, when those miserable creatures have lain under condemnation and punishment, a much longer space of duration than six or seven thousand years, [the ages or evers of this lower creation] now God will look down from the heighth of his Sanctuary:—'From heaven will the Lord behold the earth,' (yea, and who knows whether he will behold yet lower: 'If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there!')—'to hear the groaning of the prisoners, to loose them that are appointed to death.' Psa. cii. 19, 20; [in the margin here, it is *the children of death*.] This one Scripture is of more worth than ten thousand worlds. If any thing of good or mitigation is intended to them, it will come in upon this account; that they are the creatures of God and his workmanship: The Lord shall rejoice in his works, and they shall reciprocally rejoice in the Lord their God. If those very creatures who seem rejected, can but call upon him by the name of The Lord, and lay hold on him as *Esau* did when he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, 'Bless me, even me, O my father! Hast thou but one blessing, O my father? [still putting in mind of the relation] bless me, even me also, O my father!' So it may be conceived of those condemned forlorn and miserable creatures—that after they have been long in wailing and gnashing of teeth—if they can but call upon him by the name of Creator, and remember and lay it before him, that they are the works of his hands:—God hath more than one blessing to *saints* and *angels;* he may make *devils* and *condemned sinners* hewers of wood and drawers of water.—'For I will not contend forever (saith the Lord), neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit would fail before me, and the souls which I have make.' Isa. lvii. 18.—'For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' Rom. xi. 32."

The learned Dr. Henry More, in his *Divine Dialogues*, printed *Anno* 1668, especially that part which relates and pursues the vision of *Bathynous's silver* and *golden keys* (the *keys* of *Providence*,) speaks very favourably of this, yea covertly and at a distance involves it; not only in his direct maintaining the doctrine of *pre-existence*, which goes hand in hand with it; but laying down the more general principles from whence it flows.

We find, p. 479, Bathynous speaking thus:—"I was not content to think of God in the gross only, but began to consider his nature more distinctly and accurately, and to contemplate and compare his attributes.—And I did confidently conclude, that *infinite power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness*, these three, were the chiefest and most *comprehensive* attributes of the divine nature; and that the *sovereign* of these was his *goodness*, the summity and flower, as I may so speak, of the Divinity; and that particularly whereby the souls of men become divine: whereas the largest communication of the other without this would not make them divine, but devils. In the mean time being versed in no other natural philosophy nor metaphysics but the vulgar; and expecting the laws of the external creation, either visible or invisible should be suitable to that excellent and lovely *idea* of the Godhead, which with the most serious devotion and affection I entertained in my own breast; my mind was for a long time charged with inextricable puzzles and difficulties, to make the *phenomena* of the world and the vulgar opinions of men in any tolerable way to comfort or suit with these two chiefest attributes of God, his *wisdom* and his *goodness*."

This is a like plunge with that in which our *author* was found, as before-mentioned, viz. To make out that God was good: and

for the extricating of *Bathynous* [or *the deep contemplator*] out of his labyrinth, the vision of the two keys of Providence is ingenuously feigned: and the first sentence in the scroll discovered by the golden key, written in letters of gold, is this:

"The measure of Providence is the divine goodness: which has no bounds but itself; which is infinite." And another of the sentences asserts, the *pre-existence* of souls. Another, viz. 5, is, "In infinite myriads of free agents which were the framers of their own fortunes, it had been a wonder if they all of them had taken the same path; and therefore sin at the long run shook hands with opacity [or, the abyss of darkness]." And the 6th, is;—"As much as the light exceeds the shadows, so much do the regions of happiness exceed those of sin and misery."

The author of these dialogues would not go to the other six sentences, towards which he prepares the way, but makes *Bathynous* to be suddenly waked out of his dream by the braying of two asses; wittily hinting the reason why he concealed the other part of what might serve to clear up the providence of God, viz. the rudeness and clamour of *narrow* and ignorant spirits.

But lastly we find him asserting, *p.* 515. "You acknowledge then his *goodness* the leading attribute in the creation of the world, and his wisdom and power, to contrive and execute what his will actuated by his goodness did intend.—But this is a marvel of marvels to me, that the goodness of God being infinite, the effects thereof should be so narrow and finite as commonly men conceit; if there be no incapacity in the things themselves that thus straitens them. That one small share of the divine goodness should be active, but that the infinite remainder thereof, as I may so speak, silent and unactive, is a riddle, a miracle that does infinitely amaze me!"

This is indeed larger than what may be applied to the particular occasion, viz. of the time and manner of the creation of the world; but here the braying comes in again, expressed by *Sophronius:* "O Bathynous, my very heart-strings are fretted with fear and anxiety, when you plunge into such profound disquisitions as these!" And so *Bathynous* keeps still to the first part of the scroll, in which he asserts *pre-existence;* but lays the ground for its sister tenet or doctrine, viz. the *restitution* of those spirits which had their descent into regions of punishment, for their defect and lapse from their pre-existent state; which, if not prevented by the weakness and incapacity of the hearer, had been discovered as the grand point of the *second* part of the scroll; and without which ward, as I may say, of the golden key, the greatest objections against Providence are yet in force, and the *goodness* of God, which he undertakes to vindicate, remains unasserted and almost as dark as before. But he here thought a word to the wise was sufficient.

That great and good man, Dr. John Tillotson, late Archbishop of Canterbury, in his 4th volume of sermons, preached 1694, writes thus favourably upon the case, as with suspence, and suspicion of the possibility of the truth of it, p. 164:

"*The case then in short stands thus:* Whenever we break the laws of God, we fall into his hands and lie at his mercy, and he may without injustice inflict what punishment upon us he pleaseth: and consequently to secure his law from violation, he may beforehand threaten what penalties he thinks fit and necessary to deter men from the transgression of it. And this is not esteemed unjust among men, to punish crimes that are committed in an instant, with the perpetual loss of estate, or liberty, or life. Secondly, this will appear yet more reasonable, when we consider, that after all, He that threatens hath still the power of execution in his hands. For there is this remarkable difference between promises and threatenings, that he who promiseth, passeth over a *right* to another, and thereby stands obliged to him in justice and faithfulness to make good his promise; and if he do not, the party to whom the promise is made is not only disappointed, but injuriously dealt withal. But in threatenings it is quite otherwise. He that threatens keeps the right of punishing in his own hand, and is not obliged to execute what he hath threatened any further than the reasons and ends of government do require: and he may without injury to the party threatened, *remit* and *abate* as much as he pleaseth of the punishment that he hath threatened: and because in so doing he is not *worse* but *better than his word*, nobody can find fault, or complain of any wrong or injustice thereby done to him.

"Nor is this any impeachment of God's truth and faithfulness, any more than is esteemed among men a piece of falsehood not to do what they have threatened. God did absolutely threaten the destruction of *Nineveh*, and his peevish *prophet* did understand the threatenings to be absolute, and was very angry with God for employing him in a message that was not made good. But God understood his own right, and did what he pleased, notwithstanding the threatening he had denounced; and for all *Jonah* was so touched in honour that he had rather himself had died than that *Nineveh* should not have been destroyed, only to have verified his message."

Also p. 179, he says:—"*Origen*, I know not for what good reason, is said to be of opinion, that the punishment of the devils and wicked men, after the day of judgment, will continue but for a thousand years; and that after that time they shall all be finally saved. I can hardly persuade myself that so wise and learned a man as *Origen* was, should be positive in an opinion for which there can be no certain ground in reason, especially for the punctual and precise term of a thousand years. But upon the whole matter, however it be; be it for a thousand years, or be it for a longer and unknown term, or be it for ever, which is plainly threatened in the gospel; I say, however it be, this is certain, that it is infinitely wiser to take care to avoid it, than to dispute it, and to run the final hazard of it. Put it which way we will, especially if we

put it at the worst, as in all prudence we ought to do, it is by all possible means to be provided against. So terrible, so intolerable is the thought, yea, the very least *suspicion* of being miserable for ever."

This has been looked upon as so open an *intimation* of this great man, that on this account he has been written against, in vindication of the *eternity* of hell-torments.

But the most full and pregnant testimony to this doctrine, we shall collect, and that pretty largely, from that ingenious *letter of resolution concerning the opinions of* Origen, *printed* Anno 1661, known among the learned to have been written by a *Bishop* of the *Church of England*, famous for his excellent tract, *De Veritate*. We find him declaring, p. 71,—

"I come now to the *Father's* fifth opinion, which is this; 'That after long periods of time the damned shall be delivered from their torments, and try their fortunes again in such regions of the world as their nature and present disposition fits them for.'—There are in some men's minds wonderful high reaches at great and unusual objects. That disposition of soul whence such extraordinary offers proceed, you may not improperly call, the *magnificence* of the intellect, which often hath something of temerity in it; as the moral virtue of that name not seldom hath some touch of *ambition*. But as we are very favourable to this, and apt to pardon its smaller extravagancies for the sake of those high designs and eminent works to which they adhere: so by the same reason and justice ought that other to be candidly sentenced by us, when it seems to slip, because of those raised and important discoveries it makes, where it lights right and happily; especially where it seems to have been betrayed by a forward and pious endeavour of doing honour to God. Which is *Origen's* case here; of whom his greatest adversaries cannot in reason but confess, that, the error they conceive him fallen into in this opinion, proceeded from his over great solicitude of rendering the ways of *Providence* clear, and righteous, and benign. Yet this, as strange as it looks, has its probabilities too as well as the former. For he looked upon God as making all things for their good and benefit; with this gracious design that they might be happy, according to their place and order in the infinite orb of beings."

And afterwards, p. 72, we read,—"That *eternal mind*, therefore, making all things out of a principle of infinite *love*, and for the good and happiness of the things themselves, and seeing what he had made, and how he had made them, and what was likely to be the lot of some of them, from the necessary unperfectness of their natures, if their future ill-hap was like to be infinitely more sharp and dolorous, than all the good they should enjoy from him, till that calamity befel them, grateful and pleasant; his great compassion certainly would have persuaded him quickly to annihilate them; or rather his wisdom would have judged it more decorous never to have made them. But we see such *mutable* creatures made, and hear nothing of their annihilation:—Therefore we may be assured, there are such reserves in his most wise and gracious providence, as will both vindicate his sovereign goodness and wisdom from all just disparagement, and take such course with, and so dispose of all his creatures, as they shall never be but in such a condition, which, all things considered, will be more eligible than never to have been."

Again, speaking of *hell torments*, he adds:—"A sad and pityable state, and torture insufferable! But no doubt as just as great. Just, I say, not only according the estimation of modern *theology*, (which, from an excess of compliment to the justice of God, becomes almost as rude and troublesome as the ass in the *fable*, who did not fawn upon but invade his master; and which tragically pronounces that the least *peccadillo* highly deserves the greatest punishment conceivable;) but also in the compute and judgment of that All-righteous mind, which judges and orders all things by the living law of *equity*. But what, though it be so great and just;—is it therefore so *different* from the *reason* of all other punishments inflicted by God or man, that there is nothing in it of that *end* for which they are inflicted? They are *curative*, for the emendation of the party suffering; but this, if it be eternal in the *scholastic* sense of the word, leaves no place for the bettering of the sufferers, who are never to get out of this inexplicable labyrinth of woe and misery.—

"Now to think these miserable souls are so far amiss, as to be beyond the power of all redress and restitution, is to suppose God made some of his creatures very untowardly; and that when he pronounced them all very good, he looked only upon their primitive state: for, certainly, if he had cast his eyes to all possible conditions they might afterwards fall into, and seen this never-to-be-ended doom of intolerable pain and anguish of body and mind, the infinite compassionateness of his blessed nature would scarcely have given so cheerful an approbation to the works of his hands.—But then, to think they are not beyond the power of redress and recovery, and that that great punishment they shall undergo in the end of this world may contribute thereto, and yet to imagine they shall, for all this their *disposition*, be still kept in it for ever and ever, is to fix so harsh a note upon the mercy and *equity* of the righteous Judge of all the world, that the same temper in a man we should execrate and abominate."

And that the damned are in a probability, and even in a way of being bettered or disposed for grace, this learned *bishop* proceeds to shew from the *father*, viz., "That though the divine life is extinguished in them, their reason and consideration remain; and that their brutish desires being slacked by the tormenting pains, and the ideas of their joys in sin consumed or become disgustful to them, any offer of release would be welcome to them." And then he adds: "What is it then that should make the merciful Governor of heaven and earth, and hell too, the compassionate Father of spirits, either forcibly to keep off and prevent this natural course of

things, or which is worse, suffer those offers or preparations which it induces for the bettering the present condition of so great and so considerable a part of his creation, and for the putting of them into a way of return to what he at first made them, to come to nought?—So that whithersoever we look, whether to the gracious *Providence* of God, or the necessity of the *nature* of things, we find some probable hope, that the punishment of the damned, as it implies the sense of pain, should not be *eternal* in the highest sense of the word.—But whether their *release* be by any change wrought in the dispositions of their spirits, but without death; or whether by an escape, as it were, by dying, to the body so tortured: there is no doubt to be made, but that both ways they may come into play again, and try their fortunes once more in such regions of the world as Providence judges fit for them."

And towards the end of the book, p. 130, we have upon this head, something further, very considerable: viz. "Against the *fifth* [supposed *error* of the *father*] *Epiphanius* says not a syllable; I think he does not so much as barely name it; and I remember nothing in St. *Jerome* about it, but such admirations as these—"That the devils should become angels again! and Judas a saint!"—And since he has been pleased to say no more; I shall not say much, but only, what difference is there between a devil made an angel, and an angel made a devil? I am sure the advantage lies on the ascending part, rather than on the descending; for the mercy and compassion of God to all other works of his hands, may reasonably be supposed to help them up, though undeserving; but there is nothing in his most righteous nature, which would cast them down with their high demerit. But if St. *Jerome* wondered at this restitution, as certain, or easy, or of short despatch, tis his own mistake he wondered at, not *Origen's* opinion, at least in the two last particulars.

"What *Methodius* disputes from the nature and reason of punishment, against *Origen's* making the terrestrial body δεσμὸν καὶ πῖδας, [*the bond or confinement of the soul*] if it be applied to the final punishment which God will inflict upon all the obdurately wicked in the end of this world, will as much confirm this fifth opinion, as he imagined through mistake of the *father's* doctrines, and a pedantic accuracy in the use of a word, it would weaken the third; and so he really gives the *father* as much with one hand as he but thinks he takes from him with the other. For he very largely disputes in his *Socratical* way, that all punishment is *curative*, and for the emendation of the suffering party."

"Some there are that think those phrases of πῦρ αἰώνιον, and κόλασις αἰώνιον [i. e. *everlasting fire*, and *everlasting punishment*] and the like, cannot be reconciled with *Origen's* opinion. But these objectors seem to take the word αἰώνιον [rendered *everlasting*] from scholastic definitions, rather than from the true and lawful masters of language, or the authentic *rule* of its *popular use*. For 'tis notoriously known, that the *Jews*, whether writing in *Hebrew* or *Greek*, do *by Gnolam* and *aion* mean any remarkable period of duration, whether it be of life, or dispensation, or polity. Any of which periods, if plainly computable by a known time, they do then define it by a set number of years; but others which are not so known, they simply express by *Gnolam*, and αἰὼν leaving the length of them to be determined according to the subject matter; which, where it is such as comprehends more than a single determinable αἰὼν they express it in *Hebrew* by the phrase of *Lagnolam vagned*, in Greek by εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι or εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, and εἰς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. But by none of these do they mean a *scholastic* eternity; unless the nature of the thing then expressed require such interminable duration. And hence the period of this world is called αἰὼν οὗτος, when yet there is another to succeed, αἰὼν ἐκεῖνος. And as these αἰῶνες differ, so would also the meaning of αἰώνιον be different according as it was applied to the one or the other of them. And so in the plural, Christ is said to appear and suffer, ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων, when yet the longest αἰὼν of all was not then come. And he of whom it is said, *Thy throne, O God is*, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος [*for ever and ever*] yet to 'deliver up the kingdom to God the Father, and to be subject himself to him, who did subject all things to him.' So that here is plainly an *end* to that reign which is said to be *for ever and ever*. And as ἀπ' αἰῶνος does not in Scripture signify *from all eternity*, in the sense of the *schools*, so by the same reason ought not εἰς αἰῶνα to signify *to all eternity*, in the same notion: and is not εἰς αἰῶνα, and αἰώνιον all one? Every lexicographer and expositor will furnish you with authorities enough to confirm what I have said: and I leave you to judge, whether the whole subject matter in this *periodical doom*, the nature of that fire and its fuel, the power of a spirit incorporate, be not such as will enforce us to make it *shorter* than some men do; who having got easy ways of assuring themselves it shall not be their portion, do as little pity those calamitous souls whose lot it may be, as they darkly fancy God himself does. But though we from the reason of things and right use of the words, do make it shorter than they do; yet according to our *hypothesis*, the whole punishment of *pain* and *death* will necessarily be so long, as may justly be called αἰώνιον, in a very high sense of the word.

"But if out of filial respect to the authority of our *dear mother the Church of England*, you are yet something backward to give assent to the probability of *Origen's* doctrine, I would have you first to consider, that all those that write and preach in this nation, are not her sons, no more than they of *Geneva*, Scotland, or *New England* are. Secondly, I would fain know why she, who in her xxxix articles does so punctually follow the articles agreed upon in King Edward's days, or with little variation, should wholly *omit* that article which condemns the restorers of this opinion, if she had thought it ought to have been condemned."—Thus far this excellent and ingenious author.

This doctrine has been cultivated by seve-

ral others; as, SADLER, in his *Olbia*; PETER STERRY, author of *The Freedom of the will*; the author of the *Enochian walks with* GOD, and the *Revelation of the everlasting Gospel Message*, to which an excellent preface is prefixed, running very deep into the *rationale* of it; as also by a Scotch gentleman, author of the *Cabalistical* epistle, printed in the *Theosophical Transactions*, No. 5, where he brings in the testimonies of the Jewish Rabbis conspiring also to the truth of this great point, with several others. But I must contain myself; and hope what is advanced may be sufficient to show, that this opinion is not so strange and unusual, nor counted so absurd a *tenet* by the pious and learned, both of elder and later times, as it is by the generality imagined to be.

And it may be further hoped, that seeing upon examination there appears so good ground in Scripture, so great strength in reason, and such a cloud of witnesses to the truth of this doctrine, the design and endeavours of the editor of this work may yet meet with a more favourable reception, as in a time when the broken state of the Church obliges all to be looking towards the first *foundation* of it; and the revival of *apostolical truths* as well as *practice*, is so highly needful.

And *lastly*, if there be any thing slipt in the edition that may be complained of, he hopes it will be candidly censured, not having enjoyed his health for some time, during the attendance upon the press; so that it has necessarily been subject to various interruptions, and also changes from one hand to another; and so I shall no longer detain the *reader* from the body of the work itself; wishing him the satisfaction and benefit that it designs, and is also capable of giving him.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD LONDON EDITION.

THE first edition of this work was printed for Cliffe & Jackson, at the Three Crowns in the Poultry, 1712. Another edition was printed for J. Woodword, in Scalding Alley near Stocks-market, and J. Morphew near Stationer's Hall, to which no date was prefixed; the present* is printed from that of 1712.—The writer of the preceding preface (for some particular reason) thought proper, at the publishing the book, to conceal the name of the author.

Neither in *Bayle's* nor in the *Biographical* Dictionary, is there any mention made of JEREMIAH WHITE;—the principal particulars I have read concerning him, are to be found in Dr. Calamy's *account of ejected ministers*, printed in 1713. Page 5, he says,

"Mr. JEREMIAH WHITE, M. A. was fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge, and afterwards preacher to the Council of State, and household chaplain to Oliver Cromwell. He lived privately after the Restoration, preaching occasionally, without ever undertaking any pastoral charge. His conversation was very facetious, and much valued by some persons of rank and figure: he died anno 1707, Æt, 78—I know not of any thing of his writing being printed in his life-time, besides a funeral sermon for Mr. Francis Fuller, and since his death, a treatise of his has been published in octavo, entitled, *A Persuasive to moderation and forbearance in love, among the divided forms of Christians*, in which more of his works are promised."

In Dr. Calamy's 1st volume of the Continuation, page 85, is as follows:

"Mr. JEREMIAH WHITE, had with a great deal of pains and charge made a collection of the sufferings of the dissenters by the penal laws, after the restoration in 1660, which contained an account of the ruin of many thousand families in the several parts of the kingdom. by the severities of those times; when King James the second came to the crown and gave the dissenters liberty, he was very much importuned by several to print this account. Some agents of King James were with him, and made him very considerable offers if he would publish it; but as circumstances then stood, he was not to be prevailed upon, for fear of strengthening the Popish interest, which I mention in honour to his memory.

"A book of his has been published since his death, entitled, 'The restoration of all things;' or, A vindication of the goodness and grace of God, to be manifested at last in the recovery of his whole creation out of their fall,' octavo, 1712; but this is perfect *Origenism*, which is too unscriptural, too venturesome an hypothesis, to be depended on with safety."—So far Dr. Calamy's account.

But there was a book in quarto, printed 1683, entitled, *The rise, race, and royalty of the kingdom of God in the soul, by* PETER STERRY; to which a most excellent preface was wrote by JEREMIAH WHITE.

The author of the preceding preface having inserted some quotations, both ancient and modern, in support of the doctrine of the *Restoration*, I shall take the liberty to mention a few other authors, who have written upon the same subject.

Anno 1658, a small book, entitled, "Of the torments of hell, the foundation shaken and removed; with many infallible proofs that

[* This edition was printed in London, in the year 1779; for John Denis & Son, Booksellers, No. 2 Bridge street, near the Obelisk, Fleet street.]

there is not to be a punishment that shall never end:" page 180, the author writes,—

"Such torments, of such continuance, in the least agree not to the gracious mind and merciful heart of a saint—he desires not any man or creature to be in such torment an hour; therefore it doth in no way agree to the mind of God. We find, the more the Lord manifests himself in any, the more their minds and spirits are humbled, the more loving and merciful they are, even to their enemies, and can do them good for evil. Christ is full of love and mercy to the worst of men: it was truly said of Christ, 'that he was a friend of publicans and sinners.' "

In a quarto book, printed anno 1653, entitled, *God's Light declared in Mysteries*, page 12, he says,—"Now, what is *hell*, or *darkness?* 'Tis a separation from an enjoyment that it was capable of; that is *hell*, and *devil*, and *liar*, and *false prophet:* they shall not come forth till they have paid the utmost farthing, then shall they receive mercy. For know, that God is good, and just, and merciful, and he will not punish a finite thing infinitely."

Richard Coppin, in his book called *Truth's Testimony*, printed 1655, says, "God hath declared in Scripture, both by the mouths of his prophets and apostles, the salvation of all men without respect of persons, 1 Tim. ii. 4–6. 'He will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth: for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' Then may we say, 'Lord, who hath resisted thy will? Let thy will be done.' Paul says, 'That as by one man death came to all, so by one life and salvation to all;' else Christ were not sufficient to save all that Adam lost."

William Erbury, minister in South Wales, appointed by the Committe in Oliver Cromwell's time, at a salary of £100 per annum, preached publicly the restoration of all men, and is charged by Mr. Edwards, in his *Gangrena*, p. 109, with holding many gross errors, one of which was that of *universal redemption*. This *Erbury*, although he had nothing to depend on for the support of himself and family but his salary, was obliged to throw it up, his conscience accusing him of preaching for hire: he published a treatise on that account, called *The Terror of Tythes*, alluding to the anxiety of his mind whilst he received them.

The late Dr. Cheyne held this world to be a state of punishment, and in his discourses, p. 27, says,—"Some individuals may be delivered sooner, some later, according as their expiation and purification is perfected; and at last, the whole system and all its inhabitants, must naturally and necessarily, be harmoniously or analogically, and according to general laws, undergo some great and violent crise, and an universal gaol delivery will be brought about, but when and how this will be accomplished, is beyond conjecture."

Dr. Thomas Burnet, master of the Charter House, and author of a book entitled "*The Theory of the Earth*, left a treatise in Latin, that was not printed in England before his death, entitled, *The State of Departed Souls*; page 343, he says,—"The soul flies from the thought and abhors the remembrance of everlasting misery; and several things have occurred to me, while I have been thinking on this subject, by which I am sensible that others have been persuaded, as well as myself, that God neither will or can endure the perpetual affliction and torment of his own creatures."—p. 344. "That God should condemn his own creatures to a state of eternal misery, and should retain them in that state, seems to be repugnant both to divine wisdom and goodness, and I may add likewise, to justice."

The second volume of *The World Unmasked*, or, *The Philosopher the greatest Cheat*, translated from the French, is a series of letters, proving from Scripture and reason the restoration of all men.

The late Rev. William Law, so well known by many pious divines, in his *Letters*, 1st edit. octavo, printed in 1766, says, page 175,—"As for the purification of all human nature, either in this world or some after ages, I fully believe it."

I beg leave particularly to address myself to those readers, who believe in God's revealing himself to his creatures *now*, as well as heretofore, and that do not agree to that generally adopted theory, that, "Revelation is ceased;" to such I will quote a passage from Mr. Marsay, a German; a small part of his works has been translated into English, and printed in Scotland, 1749, and is entitled, *Discourses on Subjects relating to a Spiritual Life*. Page, 165, speaking of the Restoration, he says:—"Esau and Pharaoh shall not be excluded from this act of grace, glory be to God in the highest! For all the kingdoms of the earth, even unto the most unfathomable depths, shall be subjected unto our God, and to his Christ: Thou wilt bring back all into thy sheep-fold, there shall not one be wanting."

Mr. Marsay, in different parts of his works, speaks of his having several revelations made to him of spiritual things, and in particular mentions, that he was under a necessity to assert the universal restoration of all things. In his *Comment on the Revelations*, 2 vols. 12mo, in French, he has asserted many wonderful and extraordinary things, which he says were manifested to him by revelation. The first treatise that was printed of his, was not wrote till the year 1735. The late Count Zinzindorf was with him some time where he resided: and 'tis but a few years since Mr. Marsay died.—There are many other authors besides the above, who have wrote on *the restoration of all men*; and great numbers of Protestants, have and do hold the doctrine of a middle state. [See Campbell's Doctrine of a Middle State, folio, printed anno, 1721.]

I doubt not, but the late reverend and pious Mr. Hervey, was he alive, and charged with holding the doctrine of a *middle state*, would be ready to oppose it, lest it should have any the least tendency towards the Romish doctrine of Purgatory, or a state of purification. Yet Mr. Hervey, in his Letters,

vol. , page 240, speaking of souls departed, says, "They rejoice in the prospect, the assuring and refreshing prospect of receiving all the fulness of their everlasting felicity. I said *fulness;* for though the felicity of the soul is great, yet it will not be complete till the body is re-united into it."—If Mr. Hervey's words are true, it certainly must be allowed they are placed in a middle state, beyond this mortal world, but not arrived to fulness of bliss. Now what I would desire is this, that those Christians that have so great an aversion to the word *purgatory* would only change it to *purification*, and admit it possible that a soul in that *middle state* may, for ought we know, have a growth in the spiritual life, as well there as in this world, if not more so, if they are better acquainted with the certainty of rewards and punishments than in this life. It is certain, the doctrine of purgatory as held by the Romish Church ought justly to be exploded, especially that part of it by which they reap a temporal profit from the gifts they receive for praying souls out of it. But on the other hand it is also certain, that praying for the dead was the constant practice of the Church for many ages, it was allowed and practiced by our first reformers, and has been approved of by many sincere Protestants.

As to those that assert, "That this world is the only place of probation," they assert more than they know, and if they are really sincere and pious Christians, more than they ought; for, as every real Christian allows the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and as some Christians have said, that they from that Spirit assert the Restoration, those that oppose it so strenuously, might do well to consider, whether or not it is not possible for another person's spiritual knowledge to exceed their's; and, if so, whether the assertion may not be a truth, although not apparent to them? God is said in Scripture to be "no respecter of persons," and with regard to his Almightiness need be no respecter of places: and if Adam could be tempted in Paradise, which as they tell us, was a place of bliss and excellency, why should the state of souls be fixed in futurity, any more than it was in Paradise or on this earth? We find, in Luke xviii. 27, when the people said to Jesus Christ, "Who then can be saved?" Christ answered, "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God." If we believe Christ really spoke those words, why should any man so violently oppose this doctrine;—more especially, as the Scriptures so often tell us, and all men naturally agree to it, that "God is love;" that "fury is not in him;" that "his tender mercies are over all his works;" that "he keepeth not his anger forever?" Yet, in direct opposition to these gracious characters of the Almighty, the doctrine of eternal damnation asserts the contrary. I would ask, can that power be merciful, that dooms a creature to eternal misery? Can it be said, "He keepeth not his anger forever," whilst any souls are continually to feel it? Can his "tender mercies," be felt by those that are condemned to feel for ever and ever the utmost pain and torment? No, certainly it cannot. There are many thousands would gladly embrace the doctrine of the Restoration, did they not read in Scripture that of everlasting punishment; although it is allowed by all the learned in the languages, that the word translated *everlasting*, is not so, but only *ages*. How long or short a time those ages last, is known to God only. And here I cannot but think the words of Mr. Pope, in his *Universal Prayer*, worthy the most cordial reception:

"Let not this weak and erring hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On each I judge thy foe.

"If I am right, thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, O teach my heart
To find that better way."

Would men but reflect a little on the above excellent lines, they would not be so hasty in their judgments.

The Rev. Mr. Richard Clarke, in a book of his, published in 1763, entitled, "A voice of glad tidings to Jews and Gentiles," page 134, says,—"Whatever those spurious saints may think, who write their own names in the book of life, with a creed in their mouths after babbling forth its blasphemies and lies against God and his Christ, they indeed make it one of the highest joys in heaven, to view the miseries, and to hear the deep groans and dreadful shrieks of the damned in the never-ending torments of hell-fire. It is of no moment whether they are their parents or children in this horrible situation, which would reserve heaven itself to any but themselves. They write upon this ground with that abundance out of which the heart speaketh, so rejoiced do they seem in the distant idea of being spectators of eternal wrath and vengeance, that it would darken their joys to be told, that the first in salvation are to be kind ministers and instruments of saving others who are lost; under the Lord, the eldest of the elders, who according to the royal law appointed for princes, (and they are also kings in the heavenly worlds) must be servants to the later born, though those are punished for a while, and are under a very just rod and chastisement for their wilful obstinacy and stiff neck in sin and disobedience."

I hope the candid reader will not be offended at the passages here quoted from these authors. I could easily have enlarged the number of them, but I think these are sufficient to show, that eternal damnation is not an article of faith with all men. And indeed if those that oppose the doctrine of Restoration will allow, that God can save all mankind, if he will, I am at a loss to know how they can make damnation an article of faith at all, unless they attribute the same or worse passions to God than man. I know many say, "The glory of God requires it;" but I am led to think, that God can neither be glorified nor debased by all the actions of men. Man may receive from God, but cannot give

to him: again as Mr. Pope well expresses it;

"What blessings thy free bounty gives
Let me not cast away;
For God is paid when man receives:—
To enjoy is to obey."

I beg the reader's pardon for detaining him so long; but knowing many people are unacquainted, that this doctrine of the Restoration is believed in and espoused by such a variety of authors, and at so many different periods of time, was the reason, why I added another preface to this edition. I know I shall be condemned by those that oppose the Restoration, and censured by many others that do believe in it. The first will call it "a damnable doctrine;" the others will say, that "publishing of it, opens a door to all manner of licentiousness; for if they are sure they shall go to heaven, it is no matter how they live!"—Of the first I would only desire, whenever they go about to condemn me, that they would only bear in mind the words of Christ, I JUDGE NO MAN:—if they regard this, I am sure they will not proceed to condemnation. As for the last, I would beg of them to look around, and see if the doctrine of eternal damnation has that effect, to make mankind act as if they believed it true; let them only consider the general actions of men, from the prince to the peasant,—how pride, avarice, and cruelty, is the spring of almost all their actions; and then let them say if they can, they really think those people acting in that manner do believe even a future state! Sorry I am to say it, but I have observed in general, amongst those that make little or no profession of religion, more affability, generosity, and humanity than in the others. If this is really the case, what harm can proceed from adopting the belief of a general restoration, when all those that do believe it unanimously agree, that in proportion to the wickedness of their lives will be their punishment both as to pain and duration? For myself I can only say, that as I do believe God has the power to restore all mankind from their fallen state to a state of happiness, I cannot avoid believing he has the will (if I dare to say *will*, when I mention GOD) to do it; and that in GOD is neither anger, resentment, or any of those passions attributed by man to him. I allow, man, by his evil ways may bring on himself those racks and pains that he calls anger from God, but surely it is no more so in itself as to the creature, than the surgeon's instrument is to the body in particular cases. I could rather believe, there were no God at all—than to say he cannot perfect his work, or that he could designedly bring into existence millions of beings to be in pains and agonies to all eternity: I must say, I detest the thought.—I hope the readers will pardon this digression, and am their sincere well-wisher.

J. D.

PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.*

WHEN Cromwell was elevated to the Protectorship, popular zeal ran highest against the Catholic religion, and that of the Church of England, then generally termed prelacy. It would be a most difficult task to give a true picture of the Protector's character. Nearly all historians have agreed in representing him to have been a canting hypocrite; and no one, perhaps, has done this more effectually than Mr. Hume. Bishop Burnet remarks, that he "was for liberty, and the utmost latitude to all parties, so far as consisted with the peace and safety of his person and government; and therefore he was never jealous of any cause or sect, on the account of heresy or falsehood, but on his wiser accounts of political peace and quiet: and even the prejudice he had for the Episcopal party, was more for their being royalists, than for being of the good old church." The historian of the Puritans gives him a similar character. "The Protector was a Protestant, but affected to go under no denomination or party: he had Chaplains of all persuasions; and though he was by principle an independent, he esteemed all reformed Churches as part of the Catholic Church: and without aiming to establish any tenets by force or violence, he witnessed, on all occasions, an extreme zeal for liberty of conscience." The cruel laws of the Parliament if they had at first a little force, were soon abrogated both by the spirit of the times, and an express statute. The army, which at this time was not to be slighted in any of its requests, petitioned "that all penal statutes and ordinances whereby many conscientious people were molested, and the propagation of the gospel hindered, might be removed;" but from this liberty Papists, and the members of the Church of England were excluded. This petition not long after was passed into a law and thereby all the former laws against erroneous opinions were repealed. The same toleration was provided for in the *Instrument of Government*, which was drawn up at the time Cromwell was declared Protector.* By this toleration, the inculcation of Universalism was permitted without restraint, while

* This preface, which is as appropriate here as though prepared expressly for this publication, is copied entire from an excellent work by Rev. Thomas Whittemore, published in Boston, in 1830, and entitled, "The Modern History of Universalism, from the era of the Reformation to the present time."

* For the articles of this instrument, as well as similar articles of another provision made in 1657, the reader is referred to the work from which this preface is taken, pp. 73, 74.

to deny the doctrine of the Trinity was prohibited. Political motives probably had so great an influence in the framing of these articles, that we are not permitted to award to their authors that high praise to which they would otherwise have been entitled. For if this indulgence to the various sects, sprang from a true love of religious liberty, why was so dishonourable an exception made to Catholics and Episcopalians?

Cromwell lived but a few years, to exercise regal power, in the character of a Protector; and being vested with the privilege of appointing his successor, he nominated, in his last moments, his son Richard to that high office. Richard, however, possessed not his father's talents; he was humane, honest and unassuming; and on the breaking out of dissentions after his father's death, he preferred rather to retire into private life, than to bear the storm of opposition and war in maintaining his dignity. The nation remained for a short time without any fixed government whatever; and finally, by the assistance of General Monk, who commanded an army in Scotland at the Protector's death, Charles II. took the throne, and restored the ancient order of things. As all the acts of Parliament without the consent of the king are null in themselves, so power alone was needed to make Episcopacy the national form of church government, and the xxxix Articles the established doctrine. The Act of Uniformity, whereby all those who refused to conform to the Established Church and worship, were rejected from her communion and emoluments, drove from their livings the clergy to the number of two thousand, and exalted to ease and affluence those who, in the administration of Cromwell, had been coupled with Papists, and made the subjects of a particular proscription. From this time until the present, the government and faith of the Church of England have remained unchanged.

Among the clergy who were excluded by the Act of Uniformity, we may reckon Jeremy White, who had been chaplain to Cromwell, and preacher to the Council of State. He is said to have been a person of great facetiousness in his conversation; and his company, on that account, was much valued by persons of high rank. On one occasion, however, the Protector showed himself a match for his Chaplain in quickness of thought. White had paid a particular attention to one of Cromwell's daughters; and being once detected by the father on his knees before the young lady, he averted his indignation by saying that he was entreating her influence with her maid, to whom he had long paid his addresses without success. The father, knowing the artifice, upbraided the maid for her supposed neglect, and immediately ordered the marriage between her and the outwitted Chaplain to take place.

It is probable his treatise on Universal Salvation was written before old age came on; for we are informed that he at first wrote voluminously, but towards the latter part of his life, contracted the work, and prepared it for the press. Subsequently to the Restoration he preached occasionally, without undertaking any particular charge. With great pains and care he made a collection of the sufferings of the dissenters by the penal laws which were enacted in the reign of Charles II. wherein he gave an account of the ruin of several thousand families in different parts of the kingdom; but thinking it might subserve the cause of Popery, he rejected the importunity of some of King James' agents, and also large pecuniary rewards which were offered him to publish it. He died in the year 1707, aged 78.

"The Restoration of all things, or a vindication of the goodness and grace of God, to be manifested at last in the recovery of his whole creation out of their fall," was a posthumous work, and first printed five years after the author's death. As its title imports, its sole object is to set up and defend the doctrine of Universal Salvation, which is done entirely upon the ground of the Scriptures, according to the views he entertained of them. He had imbibed an aversion to the Arminian principles, which, previously to the Protectorship, had been the doctrine of many of the English prelates; hence he contends strenuously for predestination, election and reprobation; and he prized the views of the final happiness of all mankind, the more highly, because they enabled him to reconcile the decrees of God with his infinite benevolence. In the unchangeable plan of infinite wisdom, those who are elected and those who are reprobated will mutually benefit each other; the sanctification and salvation of the former are the pledge of the sanctification and salvation of the latter. He was a trinitarian, and held the doctrine of future punishment.

The plan of his work is as follows: in each chapter he produces the evidence on which he relies, and then anticipates and answers objections. His principal arguments are these: God will have all men to be saved. This is a will of authority, of supreme sovereignty; it is a fixed, determinate, irrevocable, purpose of him who ordains the means as well as the end. Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for all men without any exception; and God is the Saviour of all men, finally, in the world to come. Jesus preached to the spirits in prison, men that were gone off the stage of this world; and he was not unsuccessful like Noah, but reclaimed the disobedient, who lived afterward according to God in the spirit. Mercy is promised to the most rebellious of our race, and the gospel according to the divine command, is to be preached to every creature. That all things are to be restored, is evident from Paul's testimony both to the Ephesians, and Collossians: we have the assurance of this truth in the character of God, who is love, whose perfections are all love, and to which his very anger is subservient: and lastly, the Scriptures assure us of the complete abounding of grace over all sin and all death.

THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.

INTRODUCTION.

The great *Apostle* who lay in the bosom of his *Lord*, and partook of his intimate favours, as the disciple of Love, and consequently most nearly admitted into the secrets of God; and the revelation of his nature and good-will towards men; and yet further grace and glories to be manifested in his *Church*, tells us, as in singular expression of the divine *nature*, that it is LOVE. 1 John, iv. 8. "He that loveth not, knoweth not GOD: for God is love." And again, ver. 16. "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." And this is indeed the greatest of all the revelations given through this great apostle. God in the expression of his *nature* is not said to be *justice*, to be *wisdom*, to be *power*, but to be *just*, *wise*, *powerful*, &c. Though yet in a more metaphysical sense it may be said, God is justice itself, wisdom itself, and power itself, i. e. in the abstract; but yet so as these and all his other attributes and perfections concur together, and harmonize in unity, to make up the *nature* of God. And thus love is all: and "God is love." And love is a *unity*, the most perfect unity, which is *all in one*. And it is a *variety*, all variety displayed in that unity, in most perfect excellence and beauty. Yea, love is a *Trinity in unity*; this is involved in the very *idea* and nature of love, as we must here necessarily take it in its utmost perfection, and its eternally triumphant act. In God or Love, as the *unity*, there must be the eternal *loving* or Lover; the eternally *loved*, or beloved; and the eternal *product*, or fruit, of that love, or love in its manifestation, which as it is brought forth within the bosom of its Parent, i. e. love derivative in the bosom of Love original, which is infinite, cannot be excluded, or exist in a separate essence, but must *abide* forever in the womb of its conception, and consequently *re-act* eternally in love upon its original.

And as this necessary truth of the glorious Trinity in unity in the perfect nature of God, has been perverted and denied by many, through the extravagant sallies and presumption of human reason in things above its line and capacity; so the general nature of God also as *Love*, has been by most of the schemes of later orthodoxy almost as much injured and misrepresented to the world; and a sort of confusion of the divine attributes introduced, derogatory to the unity, predominance and supremacy of love; which is the divine nature; in giving his justice as emanating or outflowing in its strange work, or anger, a kind of co-equality and co-eternity with his love. His *original justice* is indeed co-eternal with himself, as the law of his divine nature, and the harmonious movements of it; and the glass or pattern of perfect righteousness and excellence exhibited for imitation and reflection of God in and from his creatures; but his strange work and movement in justice, i. e. in indignation against sin and sinners, as it was in accommodation to a movement of the creature, i. e. within the limits of time and accident; so as time and accident, and whatsoever implies a defect cannot be eternal, neither can this strange and accidental movement in God be so; but as his justice is subservient and acts to the *end* of his *love* which is supreme, the kindled fire in the severity of the Divine justice upon the hay and stubble, or the defect of sin, so hateful in the eye of God, must burn it up at last, and render the creature by such due chastisement and preparation capable of the grace and favour of God again; and the outflowing anger of God in strict vindictive justice, vindictive of the honour of the lese Majesty of God, and of his *right* to rule over and in all his creatures according to his own eternal will and nature, i. e. in his *love* having done its work must be resumed itself at last into its primeval, *eternal* act, viz, of *original* justice, as moving in the unity of the eternal nature or love of God; and here according to its particular nature and office, maintaining and keeping all the works of God, viz. of the original and restored creation, in that eternal order and harmonious movement, in and for which he at first designed them, and in order to which his anger, or *zeal of justice* run out after them as rebels, to subdue and reduce them back again to their obedience to the Kingdom of Love.

I shall endeavour to make good this Hypothesis in the following work; and that from the ground of Holy Scripture, which is pregnant of evidence to this great truth. And this design I shall pursue with all plainness imaginable, because all mankind is concerned in it, and therefore it is both reasonable and necessary my style should descend as low, and reach as far as my design, and be as universal in respect of the capacities of men, as it is for their interest.

The apostle saith in 1 Cor. xiii. 9, "We know but in part, and prophecy but in part." They that assume more than this, exalt themselves above that great apostle. I will, at present take it for granted, that God hath given forth what *Scripture* he intends, that the canon is perfect and sealed, but as God was

long and leisurely in giving it out, as the *Greek* speaks, Heb. i. 1. "So the mind of God therein is not understood but by portions, as He is pleased to give it forth." St. Peter tells us, the prophets themselves understood not the accents and imports of their own prophecies: God proportioning his discoveries with a kind of equality among his children and favourites, reserving some things for the last and youngest, that they who went before without us should not be made perfect. Heb. xi. 40.

That which occurs to me in my observation, as the *Desiderandum*, to loosen the hard knots and difficulties in the case, is the acknowledgment of a common, or rather universal grace and salvation, and the reconciling thereof, with special and peculiar grace and favour: which varieth not much from that which the apostle suggests to be wanting, as that, that would (when added) supply and perfect both our discovery, and our living in that forementioned *love*, 1 Cor. xiii.; which is ever spoken of with peculiar honour, as of a perfective nature, (1 John iv. 18.) and is called the bond of perfectness, Col. iii. 14. And, in John iv. 9. the apostle tells us, "We love God, because he first loved us." Until God's love in the heights and depths, and other the dimensions of it be known, the spring, the seed, the producing cause of our love to God, and our brother is wanting.

But this will appear plainly to our experience, in the instance of the controversy between the *Orthodox*, as they are vulgarly called, and the *Arminians*, in which so many learned and pious pens on both sides have sweat and tired themselves and their readers, but not satisfied them; for all that hath been hitherto suggested by the first, doth by no means salve those harsh phenomenas of an appearing harshness in God, in the exercise of that sovereign prerogative of his, which they most rightly allow to him, and which is necessarily vested in him as Supreme; but thus exercised with the irreparable damage of the creature, justly seems so disagreeable to his goodness, that from hence the latter, viz. *Arminians*, have with (it may be) a pure intention of mind, run into another most absurd extreme, and have taken occasion thereby to ascribe a power unto man, and a freedom of will absolute and independent as to those acts relating to a future state, setting him up in a capacity of a right conduct of himself, and by common grace, to the making void and needless the covenant of grace, and the blood of Christ himself in the high and glorious ends of it. And all this market for Satan hath been made, by not rightly discerning and stating the sovereign prerogative of God, and the qualified and righteous exercise thereof; wherein, although he fully displays the glory of his wisdom, holiness, justice, and severity in the suffering of man to make a full discovery of himself, his own defectibility, vertibility, mutability, vanity, and pride, and also punishes him for the same according to his works. Yet this not finally and irremediably so as to abandon and forget his grace and goodness forever: nay, he gives scope to those glories, those other glories of his, to manifest themselves so fully, in order to that sweetest, fullest, and most triumphant glorious close he will make at last, when all shall meet and end in grace and love, as in a stately pyramid or top stone, they being all but steps to this throne, and guarders of it. And thus also, all the sin, vanity, and instability of the creature (which is the matter and occasion about which those subordinate glories are employed and exercised) shall at last issue and break up into the wonderful and glorious manifestation of the wisdom and goodness of God, into an admirable foil and set-off to his immutability and eternity. And if sin and punishment be but instrumental in God's design, and subordinate to an higher and more ultimate project and end, then it must be bounded and circumscribed within a certain space and limit of time, how great soever that be, be it for the whole course of time, which may be therefore termed for ever and everlasting, comprehending this world, and the world next to come, which are both of them but a double parenthesis in eternity; yet as it had a beginning, so it must have an end, and must lie down and yield up itself in that abyss of boundless and endless love and grace which was before it, and let it come forth for its own glory, and must shine forth in the perfect conquest and subduing of it to the harmony of the first all-comprehending design, as the sun without a cloud forever.

And here I do, in the fear of God, most humbly prostrate myself before his Divine Majesty, and in the deepest sense of my own darkness and distance from him, do with all my might beg of that infinite goodness I am endeavouring to represent to others, that if something like to this platform and prospect of things, be not agreeable to that revealed and natural light he hath given to us, that my undertaking may be interrupted, my design fall, and that the Lord would pardon my attempt: and I know he will do so, for he hath given me to have no further concern for this matter, than as I apprehend it to be a most glorious truth, witnessed to both by the Scriptures of truth, and by the most essential principles of our own reason, and which will be found so at the last opening of the *everlasting* Gospel, to recover in that opening a degenerate world. But if this be a true draught and representation of the glorious designment of the ever blessed goodness of the great God, who is goodness itself, and if the Holy Scriptures and right reason do bear witness unto it, how clear, how fair, how open lies the way before us to justify the sovereign power, and disposal of God, which he exercises by election and reprobation too, with all the methods he useth in his holy and glorious wisdom and prudence, in giving way to the entrance of sin, and then enflaming the anguish of it by the law, that he may thereby have occasion to glorify his justice and wrath against it, and so make his way to the more glorious illustration of his grace and love in the close. And how apposite, effectual, and justifiable a course of proceeding will the way of God now appear in humbling poor, proud man, in bringing him to his foot, making him to know himself, how frail and

foolish a thing he is, how unfit for the conduct of himself, will appear from the light which the end and design of God therein reflects upon it, which is but to make him a meet and subject spouse for his own embraces at last, having no will, no wisdom, nothing of his own to rejoice or glory in, but to be wholly given up as a passive subject for this all-glorious and ever-pregnant fulness to empty and pour forth himself into and upon to all eternity.

In a word, in this account and prospect there is, as we shall see in the sequel of this discourse, nothing omitted, nothing quarrelled, nothing excluded of all the ways and methods of God with men, which have been by good minds variously contended for.

Here his universal grace doth no longer thrust out his special and peculiar favour. Reprobation here will be found consisting with election, yea, damnation itself with salvation; here all those knots which the other systems of divinity have hitherto tyed faster, are in a great measure loosened.

Here all those difficulties in the Christian religion, which have so long perplexed the more thinking and enquiring minds, are, if not quite removed, at least made so easy, that we may with some contentment and pleasure wait for that state which can alone perfectly satisfy us. And yet all this while, nothing of moment in Christianity is any way assaulted and shaken, but all is much better established and confirmed, being hereby made one entire piece, most pure and pleasant from the highest truth, and the highest good, meeting both in one throughout the whole contrivance.

Here the freedom and peculiarity of God's grace is fully reconciled to the amplitude and extent of it. Here we may behold the sovereignty, the absoluteness of God, and his goodness embracing each other with the greatest delight to him, and to us, whilst we now see this sovereignty and absoluteness of God to be sovereignly and absolutely good, and his goodness alone thus absolute and sovereign. Here all those false, barbarous and monstrous representations of a God are taken away which have hitherto hindered so many minds (otherwise ingenious) from owning of him, for fear they should at the same time they acknowledge the supreme Being, reproach and blaspheme him, by leaving out the highest and most essential perfection of his Deity, which is goodness, or at least making it more narrow, limited, and contracted, than that of a finite and imperfect creature.

Here, in a word, all the scenes of time, and all things done therein, are with an unspeakable pleasure discovered and seen to be environed, encompassed, enfolded in the arms and embraces of eternity, lying down and resting there, as in the end to which they were eternally ordained.

He is not a Christian, he is not a man, he hath put off the tenderness and bowels of a man, he hath lost humanity itself, he hath not so much charity as *Dives* expressed in hell, that cannot readily cry out, "This is good news if it be true;" that will not say *Amen* to it, provided it be agreeable to God, and what his word will countenance and own; for under no other law or condition can we groundedly rejoice in any doctrine, than as it bears the impress and stamp of divine authority, and tends to his glory, to which all must bow: for heaven itself must pass away, rather than the gospel be innovated, or another gospel broached, how gratifying or acceptable soever to our fleshly minds. Upon this supposition then, I conclude this doctrine must be acceptable and welcome to every good man.

It is a fond self-love which computes the riches of God's grace, from that respect it hath to a man's self; but wherever a true and generous spirit of love and goodness doth reside, it will account that most rich and free which is of the largest extent. It is certainly no argument of rejoicing to a good man, that he here enjoys more than others do, for he would be better pleased if they were as happy as himself, if he did not see or believe some wise and good ends why it is not so; but none such can be found out for such a difference of cases in that state hereafter, as we shall see more at large in its proper place. It is the nature of every good man to rejoice in the good of others, to take pleasure in being instrumental thereto, and this his temper of mind is a participation of God, a beam, a ray, a spark of the divine image and nature, and the highest perfection that the soul of man is capable of. If then we will do honour to God, and pronounce, according to our faculties, and the best light that heaven hath given us, must we not conclude that God is infinitely better, more loving, more tender, more pitiful and compassionate in all degrees both of intention and extension, than the very best, yea, than all the sons of men put together?

Now in the trial of this great concern and cause, I shall first produce the evidence I have for this scheme, and then answer the several objections which may be brought against it, and so leave the impartial reader, when he hath perused and considered what can be said on both sides, to pass his judgment upon the whole matter. And here I desire again, that if I have a truth of God to manage, and this be the due season for the publishing of it, that he would throughout this whole discourse, prepare and assist my mind with that humility, purity, spirituality, light, love, and strength from his Holy Spirit, as may enable me to manifest it, as I ought, to all persons interested in it, and to maintain it against all the opposition I expect to meet with from all sorts of persons that have already found their satisfaction, and taken up their rest in their present measures of understanding. But if otherwise it be a delusion, a dream, a fancy, or the vision of my own brain, I do unfeignedly beseech God mercifully to stop my pen, that I may neither create trouble to myself, or to the church of God, which ought to be, and is more dear to me than myself.

I do also sincerely declare to all those who are partakers of that spirit, which is a spirit of meekness and divine love, as well as of

truth, that they cannot do any thing more acceptable to me, than in that spirit to endeavour to convince me of the falsehood and evil of this undertaking, for as no man willingly takes conterfeits for realities, or affects to be cozened in the riches of this world, so much less can any reasonable being choose to be deceived in the belief of truth, or disappointed in his expectation of good, which are the most peculiar treasures of the mind, since that which lies within me, is more truly mine than any thing without me can be supposed to be; nor can I be so confidently assured of any thing as I modestly am of this, that if what I am attempting to make out, be not some part, and indeed a principal part of that truth and goodness, which all intellectual nature is every where seeking after and must finally rest in. This discovery, from what hand soever it comes, will be more welcome to me, than the greatest antidote in the world, if upon a mistake I had drank in the worst of poisons.

And if after this ingenuous acknowledgment, any shall undertake to answer this discourse by reviling and reproaching the author, let them daub me as much as they please: but let them take heed of defiling, and wronging themselves by so doing; and beware, lest when by their rash censures they run upon me, they do not at the same time blindly rush upon the hiding of power, which the prophet *Habakkuk*, speaking of CHRIST in the spirit, tells us, is in his hand, Hab. iii. 4, viz. In those spiritual discoveries of Christ, which are as hands of light by which he puts forth himself, and takes hold of the world.

For my own part, I find my mind perfectly satisfied by this love which hath subdued me to this undertaking, quietly to leave the whole matter to that day, which will make all things manifest, and declare every man's works, of what sort it is; for my conscience bears me witness, that no particular nor selfish interest of any kind, but a sincere aim at the glory of God, by a right representation of him to the children of men, and an universal charity and good-will to all mankind; yea to all my fellow creatures, hath set me on work, and after many struggles and exercises of mind extorted this discourse from me.

I have often observed with great admiration and pleasure, those most affectionate irruptions of spirit and strongest pangs of love in Moses and Paul. "Blot me out of the book," saith one, "I could be accursed from Christ," saith the other, for the sake of my brethren. I sometimes feel so much of the same love working in my soul, that I can hardly think those expressions were hyperboles, much less that they ought to have such lean interpretations as is usually put upon them.

It was a noble speech of a great person, and I should think must be the sense of every good man's soul: "Might it be lawful for me to put forth one act of Omnipotence, that I might redeem poor, sunk, degenerate souls, then I would be content to be buried in the grave of an eternal nothing."

I verily believe, that a man throughly acted by a spirit of goodness, would be ever content to live in a banishment from God, I mean from the sweet illapses and touches of his love, so that he might be without sin, rather than any of God's creation should be ever unacquainted with him, and therefore he thinks it would be the best employment, and greatest happiness in the world to be used as an instrument to such a universal good.

And whilst I sometimes entertain myself with such thoughts as these, I feel a secret joy springing in my soul, and whispering to me, if there be so much love in a drop, in a beam, in a creature, there must sure be infinitely more in all respects in the ocean, in the sun, in God himself. I find all these good desires, and cares in myself swallowed up by the discovery of an object which is all goodness and omnipotence, and infinitely wise and almighty goodness; and a ravishing sight of all things already lying in his tender arms and sacred embraces; who in his sovereign and incomprehensible wisdom hath still been conducting them through all their various intricacies for a greater good and glory.

I shall now proceed directly to the prroof of this great point and hypothesis; and show the certainty and necessity of it from the ground and foundation of truth, the holy Scripture itself, which abounds with confirmations of it, and would do so much more if exactly and fairly translated.

CHAPTER I.

The first proof of this Hypothesis from Scripture. The will of God that all shall be saved. And the Efficacy of that Will.

The Apostle Paul exhorting to prayers for all men, urgeth and backs his exhortation upon this ground, that "this is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 3.

The letter of this text is full and express. God will have *all* men to be saved; and should we press it, there are almost as many arguments as words in it. For

1. It is not said, he *would* have all men to be saved, by his good-will; but he *will* have all men to be saved. It is a *will of authority* and sovereignty, of *supreme sovereignty*.

2. It is an *immanent, permanent*, a *fixed*, a *determinate* act of his will, not *transient* nor *revocable*: he *will* have all men to be saved.

3. He so wills *the end* as withal he wills all *necessary means* leading to it: he will have all men to be saved and *come to the knowledge of the truth*. There is no man is or can be sanctified or saved without the knowledge of the truth. God wills this therefore that they be saved, and that this means of salvation shall pass upon them.

4. This will hath its *ground* in the property of *God's nature*, this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. Thence it derives itself, where these words *our Saviour*

are not to be restrained to *the elect*, for that would not carry forth a will to save all men; this therefore is to be taken in the same latitude and *extent* with other places where he is called "the Saviour of all men." Chap. iv. 10. And God that "quickeneth all things." Chap. vi. 13. And our Saviour tells us, "all things live to God," Luke xx. 38, and he is called "the God of the spirits of all flesh." Numb. xvi. 22. And mark you, who is this Saviour? It is *God*, not only Christ, for of him he speaketh distinctly afterwards; but *the God the Father of our Lord* Jesus Christ.

5. Upon this account he said, this office of praying for all men, "is acceptable before God" our Saviour, which is not meant of a *simple acceptation*, as every good work is acceptable, but *by way of eminence*, this compared with other good works is singularly, eminently, peculiarly acceptable. Now things are so said to be acceptable to men when they *suit their inclinations*, and *gratify their great design* that they are intent upon, and fall in with it: so doth this office of praying for and seeking the good, the spiritual good, the eternal good of all men. It falls in with God's great design, and tends to bring it forth into effect. When Job prayed for his friends, that had been very harsh upon him, God took it so well that he *turned Job's captivity* upon it, though God was purposed to restore Job, yet he takes the very nick of that time to do it, when Job prayed for his friends. I know what Calvin and other expositors generally say, to invalidate this argument, *De hominum generibus non Singulis personis sermo est*, and afterwards upon v. 6, of Christ giving himself a ranson for all, he said, *Particula Universalis semper ad hominum genera referri debet non ad personas, viz.* That this particle of universality ought always to be understood of all ranks or sort of men, not of all individuals; but giving no reason for it but his own judgment, or *ipse dixit*, I need not further concern myself with it, yet for the honour I bear the author, I shall give my reason why I take it otherwise, which is this.

The apostle doth not exhort to pray for *the office of magistracy*, abstracted from the *persons*, but for the persons of rulers, or of all in eminency, the persons in rule at that time, whether *Nero*, or any other as bad as he, and the subordinates under them as bad men as the world had any, (so much worse as they were obliged by him whom they represented to have been better;) these persons of men are the objects designed upon and recommended to the prayers of the churches; and on occasion thereof is the will of God produced. But now the reason holds for all men, as well as for these, these being as bad as any, and the very words of the text so carry the intentions: it is under the *Title of Man*, that kings must claim the benefit of this recommendation to the prayers of the Church for all men, and they come in the crowd of all men in God's willing their salvation as all, ver. 4, and which *all men* he will have saved.

Now if God wills the salvation of Nero, and his subordinate ministers which might be as bad as he, who besides the common sins of inferior men, abuse that eminency in which they were placed of God, let us then bring home the argument. God by the apostle requires prayers to be offered up *for all men*, for kings and all in the eminency, or as the original word is, for all that are uppermost, whatever their title was; he declares he will have all men to be saved; the instance and practice in the then present case, falls upon *very notorious men*, as bad as any time ever afforded.

Now how is it fair (the state of the question being thus truly put,) to say that by these *all men* God intends not *singulos generum*, but *genera singulorum*, that he intends some of all ranks only, as a garland composed of divers sorts of flowers picked here and there? I grant when we come to election, God chooses oft-times the worst and unworthiest, but election, or the grace of election, is never so delivered in general terms, but exceeding special and restrained; many are called, but *few are chosen;* and, you see your calling, brethren, how that *not many wise men* after the flesh, *not many mighty, not many noble* are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, &c. Therefore this salvation, with reference to which God is called generally a Saviour, and wills that all men be saved, is of *another sort*, and upon *another score*, than that whereof the elect are peculiarly partakers, as we shall show in the sequel of this discourse; and therefore when we are required here to pray for all men, and seek their good, even their salvation, it is not in contradiction to this distinction that God hath made. It is *not to reverse* and after God's decrees whereby he hath given some the *pre-eminence*, and *double portion* above others, but it is a seeking *that salvation* for all which God hath *prepared* for them in his *own time and way*.

And surely if there was no salvation at all for some men, God would never employ his people to pray for all, for if the spirit be the framer, and inditer of the saints' prayers, and makes intercession in them, it is most consonant to the honour of that spirit to apprehend, that he knowing and searching the deep things of God, will make intercession in us according to that will; and so the Scripture expressly acquaints us, and that God knows the mind of the spirit in that intercession, that it clashes not with any council of his. Rom. viii. 27. Therefore this very command to pray for all men, especially backed with this reason (for God wills that all men be saved) is a strong argument that *there is a salvation in God to be issued out sooner or later, even for all men;* which is also more than strongly implied in the ascribing that title to God of being our Saviour, which I have shewed before, as it is to be understood generally, so also *actually*. For it is not said, he purposes, or inclines, or resolves to be a Saviour, but is a Saviour *in act*. For indeed all his works are finished to him from the foundation of the world, and we are *saved in him* before the notice of it comes to us, as the apostle saith, though it was a mystery and was hid in God till it was manifested by the gospel. So the salvation of all men

is a done thing with God, though it hath its proper seasons to be exhibited to the view and notice of men. I cannot imagine what can be further objected against so plain an evidence as this text affords, but an exception to the will whereby God wills that all men be saved; that it is *voluntas imperantis* not *voluntas agentis*, that God wills, that is, commands all men to attend the means of salvation, and that the Gospel be tendered to all. If this exposition doth not retrieve the evidence, I know not what can, but it must stand as a good proof for the hypothesis.

Now for answer to this, how weak a pretence such a cold desire of all men's salvation is to ground that praise and eulogy which is ascribed to God, when he is recognised as the Saviour in common, that will have all men to be saved, may appear by considering these particulars.

1. That this good-will resting here and proceeding no further than the propounding salvation to men, and putting them on the use of the means to attain the same, never yet saved any one soul, no not of the elect themselves, and,

2. God hath not been sparing to tell and instruct men, in this that they are dead in trespasses and sins, and without Christ *they can do nothing*, and that every good and perfect gift *comes down from above*, that they must be *born again*, born of the Spirit, that faith itself whereby we receive all, is the gift of God; therefore the will of God that all men be saved cannot rest, cannot be shut up in such strait powerless bounds of commanding, and setting them upon the use of means to open their own blind eyes, and change their own naughty hearts. Hear what St. James saith of things more in the power of men themselves than these things are, which are not in the least, nor even were in the power of creature, Jam. ii. 15, 16: "If any see a brother or sister naked, and destitude of daily food: and one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body; what doth it profit?" Yet men may work, and by their labour in some cases earn what they need for these temporal things, but there is no possibility of recovering ourselves to life, and saving our own souls by any power of nature, or the law, or by the letter of the Gospel. Therefore God's will that all men be saved, rests not in such things as these, in pitying men, and wishing it better with them; this is not a love for *Omnipotency*, this is not a good-will for Him that is the *God of grace*, that is love itself; this were less than the love of the Samaritan to the wounded traveller; nay, for ought I know, than the love of the priest, or the Levite that passed by him; they had as much love as this. God is an eternal act of goodness, love, and sweetness, that carries his effect and end eternally in himself, and though there be a process in the discovery of this love to us, yet in its first and eternal emanation and motion, (if we may so speak) he is in the term of his motion. For he hath and possesseth the term eternally in himself, and whom he loves, *he loves to the end*, loves fully, perfectly, furnishing and supplying all things to the end of his love richly, freely, entirely, out of himself, though he enriches, embellishes this his work, this his love, with all the riches, the fulness, *the variety*, the darkest, the sablest contrariety of the fall, the curse, and wrath, yet those contraries tempered, subdued, reconciled, all to a most delightful, blissful harmony in the close.

3. The *will* of God, and his *work* are one. God wills nothing but he works it, who "worketh all things after the council of his own will," Eph. i. 11; for he wills nothing but with counsel, though he go for no counsel out of himself, but his own will is his counsel; but the meaning is, that every thing that God wills, stands upon grounds of the most absolute wisdom and prudence; that if a council were called of all creatures, nay of all the attributes of God, better advice could not be given or taken; no wonder then if what is so deliberated and resolved be accordingly pursued to effect and put in execution, being the result of such a counsel, even the counsel of Him whose will is counsel, hath all counsel in it, that is so perfect that nothing can be added to it; therefore his word is his work, he spake and it was done, he is the rock, and his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment, a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he. Deut. xxxii.

4. The sum of this evidence is, that God wills that all men be saved, this will is the will of an Omnipotent and sincere Agent, an immanent and eternal will, eternally in act, that hath its end in its own power, yea in his arms and embraces, and neither can, nor could ever be resisted. And upon the account of this his will, he requires us to pray for and seek the spiritual and eternal good of all, which we cannot do as we ought, without the help of his spirit, who searcheth the deep things of God, and maketh intercession in us according to that will, and therefore would not move in any thing, (and so not in this desire of the salvation of all men) were it not according to the will of God, nor would the saints find acceptance with God in such requests, were they otherwise; which yet God hath declared they do, saying, "This is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour," who upon the account of willing the Salvation of all men, is recognised by this title of *Saviour*, the common Saviour. So much for this text, this is the first witness.

CHAPTER II

Further Evidence of this Hypothesis, from the Consideration of the Unity of God.

The following verses will make further evidence to us of this truth, "for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, a testimony, for its proper times," for so the words are rather to be read, than as in our translation.

I intended first to produce what evidence might be afforded from plain texts and authorities, before I came to the argumentive texts

and deductions, and to have drawn forth my proofs in this order; first to show how God the Father stands engaged and affected in this cause, and then Christ the Son and Mediator. But for as much as these verses follow upon the former, and both receive lustre from them, as also reflect back a lustre upon them, let us without adjourning them to another place and time, hear their evidence presently.

1. We have the unity of God making evidence in this cause, there is one *God; "for there is one God."*

2. The unity of the Mediator; "and there is one Mediator between God and men, who gave himself," &c.

3. The extent and universality of his ranson; which was *for every man.*

4. A tacit objection obviated and prevented, from the apprehended novelty of this truth, not apprehended in any times heretofore.

I. To begin with the first, the unity of God; ("for there is one God.") Why is this brought? The question may be, whether to engage us to pray for all men, or whether to prove that he will have all men to be saved, or whether for both these ends?

I shall not lose time to dispute it, but if it prove the latter, viz. for that God will have all men to be saved, then it *ex abundanti*, and into the bargain proves and engages to the duty of praying for all men. Now this will appear in the opening the force of this argument, "for there is one God," which we may get some knowledge of from other places where this argument is used, as Rom. iii. 29, is he the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles also, "seeing it is one God that justifieth the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." We may read the words thus, Is there a God of the Jews only, or have the Jews only a God, have not the Gentiles a God also? yea, sure, and the same God; and therefore the apostle concludes the same justification to be extended to the one as to the other. So likewise, Gal. iii. 20, when the apostle would show that the law, which was 430 years from the promise, cannot disannul or make void the promise made so long before, useth this argument, *that God is one.* "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgression, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made, and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator; now a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, but God is one." In both these places the apostle riseth up to a consideration of God in his supreme and absolute unity above law or Mediator, or any division of people or seeds founded thereon. In which absoluteness God is not obliged to give any account of himself, or any of his matters, may do with his own what he will. And this absoluteness and supremacy of his will is so exercised by him, not as by the tyrants of this world, to the enthralling, oppressing, to the hurt or hindrance of his creatures, but to the relief and highest security of them; and cannot be otherwise, from his nature, that is goodness itself, and is *ultimum refugium*, the last and most sure retreat and refuge of the creature, when it feels itself lost all other ways, as that which will raise it again.

When I say this unity and absoluteness of God transcends the consideration of a Mediator, as well as the law, I desire to be understood in no other sense than the Scripture itself speaks, which is a qualified sense, viz. as the Mediator supposes a breach and distance between God and man, by reason of sin, not otherwise; for so the apostle intimates, when he saith the law was so long after the promise, and was added because of transgression, and ordained in the hand of a Mediator. Now a Mediator is not of one, but God in the absoluteness of his first and original grace went forth to man in Christ, as Christ was the head of all men, before and above all consideration of Christ as a Mediator of atonement, or any need thereof; and there the seed was but one, not divided; and he, even God, was one, and alone bearing the same relation, the same love to all: the splitting and dividing them, making some the vessels of mercy and election, others of wrath by reprobation; which way soever persons understand it, was subordinate counsel and design for the illustration of his ultimate glory.

To clear this, let us consider the oneness of God, what it is, and what it imports. One is *pars numeri*, a part of number, many units make a number, and one is *fons numeri*, the fountain of number, the *principium enumerationis*, the beginning of number. God is not only one so, but he is both the beginning and total sum of all, he is one and alone, and there is none besides him; but he is a great one, he is the one that is all, that gathers and takes in all, that binds up all in one, and is one in all, and makes all one, as love doth, which is called the bond of perfectness. His oneness is the soul that diffuseth itself through the whole, through all the parts, and is *toto in toto and toto in qualibet parte*, entire in the whole, and in every part, making thereby many members to be one body, as in the Godhead there are three persons, yet these three are one, as in the divine essence there are several attributes, yet they are all one, there is one mind, one spirit in them all: so in his counsels and works this oneness is a quintessence, a result, a spirit of glory that riseth out of them all, comprehends them all, is the crown and perfection of them all.

1. As to instance in those varieties and seeming contrarieties that are in the ways and works of God, wherein the Scriptures show a harmony and unity of counsel and design, as the law and grace, what more differing, what more contrary the apprehension of man? The law entered, saith the apostle, that sin might abound, but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, &c. Rom. v. 21.

Here are three pair of contraries, the law and grace, sin and righteousness, death and life; here are two contrary works, sin abounding, grace superabounding; here are two contrary ends, sin reigning to death, grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal

life; yet behold here the unity of the counsel and design, the dark scene of the law and sin, and death, is subordinate to the light; and for the illustration of it, grace gets above the law, righteousness riseth above sin, eternal life abolishes death, and so the design and counsel of God in this conflict and combat, clears up into a design and counsel of highest love and pleasure.

You will say the fruit and advantage of this counsel redounds only to the elect. I grant it as first fruits; we shall reach further by degrees; this being but a part of the whole of his counsels, yet it proves the unity of the counsel thus far; for you may remember we told you this unity is as the soul, that is entire in the whole, and entire in every part; the entireness in the parts were nothing, if it were not also in the whole, which if it be a truth, will appear at length.

2. The next instance I shall bring, is of the Jews and Gentiles, which division takes in the whole world, all either being Jews or Gentiles. God first appropriated the Jews, and left out the Gentiles; then he takes in the Gentiles and casts off the Jews, concluding them in unbelief, as the Gentiles had been concluded in unbelief before. As touching the law and its privileges, whereby God had signalized the Jews, and carried them up into an eminency and singularity of favour, the Gentiles were enemies, they grudged and grumbled at it, and envied them.

As to the Gospel, whereby the Gentiles got the start (the last were first) the Jews were enemies for their sakes: thus by turns, all, both Jews and Gentiles, are concluded under sin and unbelief; but what is the design of all? It is a great mystery the apostle confesses when he opens it, wherein the depths and riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God lie fair to be seen, from Rom. xi. 25.

1. This is but for a time, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, that blindness is happened to Israel, which gives light to all the subordinate wills, counsels, and dispensations of God; they are bounded and limited within a certain space and period; nothing runs out beyond time, but that which is God's ultimate scope and highest end of the whole, as shall be shown in its place; this is the first qualification of this dark scene of the Jews; rejection is but for a time, and when that time is run out, then all Israel shall be saved, as verse 26: and then,

2. Verse 28. Though as touching this dispensation of the Gospel, the Jews are enemies upon the Gentiles' account, yet there is an higher and more original grace, within the verge whereof they are, and that is the election, as touching which, they are beloved for their fathers' sake; which by the way acquaints us, that the present dispensation of the Gospel measures not out to us all the grace that is in God: there is a surplusage, a reserve behind to be manifested in its own proper time, as the apostle speaks in this place of Timothy which we are upon.

3. The apostle proceeds, "for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance." The Jews had sufficiently forfeited all, but God will be like himself, he loved the fathers, and he will not cut off the children for ever. And was not Adam the son of God; and are not all men Adam's children? did not God make Adam in his own image, make paradise for Adam, and gave him dominion over all the works of his hands? Did God begin thus with Adam, as well as ever he did with Abraham, and shall he not end as sweetly? Shall not the gifts and calling of God here be without repentance, as well as in the case of the Jews?

4. The apostle rises yet higher, and makes the present unbelief of the Jews an argument for their future restoration, ver. 30, 31. "Whereas the Gentiles in times past have not believed, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy." What a soul or spirit of unity is this, running through all the dispensations and works of God, that out of such contraries as faith and unbelief, mercy and rejection works out the same end of mercy, mercy to the Gentiles through the Jews' unbelief, mercy to the Jews through the faith and mercy of the Gentiles.

5. The best is behind, which is the light of the whole piece, resulting from the several varieties in it, ver. 32. "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," where the *all* that are the lump in unbelief are not the Jews only, but *both* peoples; for of the Jews he had said, *blindness in part is happened to Israel*, i. e. the two tribes and some scattered parcels of the rest; for the generality of the ten tribes were never tried with the Gospel; therefore in the latter place the *all* are both Jews and Gentiles; God will have mercy upon them all, when "God remembers his mercy and truth to the house of Israel, then all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God." Ps. xcviii. 3. If this reach not to our grand purpose as the former instance it proves it by parts.

III. My third instance may carry us a little further: it is of vessels to honour and vessels to dishonour. Contrarier things cannot well be imagined. 2 Tim. ii. 20. "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour." The apostle before reflects on dangerous doctrines, and the broachers of them, teaching that the resurrection is past already to the overthrowing of the faith of some. What a jar is this in the Church of God? how shall this be reduced, reconciled, subdued, to any good concord and harmony? The apostle is larger than to give out at this difficulty: there is an expedient for this, and that is, there is a great house hath divers and differing vessels for worth and use. But were it not better there were but one sort? consider the allusion, and then answer it. While there are mean offices to be done, dirty hands are for dirty work, and these scullions make the vessels of gold and silver bright, these wooden and earthen vessels carry out the dirt, and excuse the vessels of gold and silver; but when all the dirty work is over, and

all the filth carried out and purged, then it will be time to find fault with the vessels of wood and earth, that all may become vessels of gold and silver, and not before.

We see by this Scripture that the house of God is very great, and there are in it vessels of several values and uses, vessels of gold and silver, wood and earth; the vessels of wood and earth are vessels of the house, of the great house, as well as those of gold and silver, though not alike precious, nor to uses so honourable; but they have an unity in relation to the house, which is all the stress I put this place to.

But if we rise hence to the unity of the Master of this great house, it will give more countenance to our argument.

God is one. All men, reprobates as they are, called as well as elect, share in relation to this one God, have one and the self-same God; the elect have not one God, and the reprobate another, but one God is God of them both. It is an argument God uses in Mal. ii. 10, against oppression of one another: "Have not we all one Father? hath not one God created us?" Yea, the same good, and kind, and merciful God and Father made all. So the apostle to the Ephesians, chap. iv. 6, to conclude the argument to unity, brings in "this one God and Father of all," which though applied there to believers, as the former place in Malachi is to the Jews, yet it is true of all men, God is the God and Father of all men. And doth that afford no comfort and hope to men? It is the great and crowning joy of the New Jerusalem, that God himself shall be with them, and be their God: "And I will be your God," in the new covenant, "and you shall be my people." I grant God is especially and peculiarly the God of believers, yet he is the God of all men: believers eminently have the present actual fruit and comfort of it; but is God the God of any, and is there not a comfort and hope in it, first or last? "Ye are of your father the devil," saith Christ to the Jews, that sought to kill him in that image; in that spirit they were of the devil, yet God's right in them cannot be lost. God is not the Father of sin, though of the sinner, he is the God and Father of sinners, though not as sinners, but as his creatures, and in that rank of creatures, men: ("who make of one blood all nations of men," as Acts xvii. 26.) And the very heathen by the light of nature, did lay claim to him as his offspring: and the Holy Ghost allows it, saying, "Moreover he is not far from every one of us;" though we be far in our minds from him, yet there is such a rooted hope towards God in the very worst of men, except such who are under the judicial stroke of despair, which is also in its time to vanish, that they promise themselves mercy from it, though they know not why, nor are sensible, as they should be, of their forfeiture.

2. The relation that this one God bears to men, was original and antecedent to sin; there was a relation between God and man before sin entered; sin is of a later date than that relation. We read in Genesis i. that God made man and all things else good, exceeding good; when God reviewed every day's work, he saw it good. Good then hath the start of evil, the precedence of it, it is the elder, and though God made but one man, yet that one man was all; as we all sinned and fell in him, so we all were made in the image of God in him; we were all crowned with glory and honour in him, with the favour and love of God. This is no strain; the Scripture saith, Levi paid tithes to Melchizedeck, though then in his father Abraham's loins, and not brought forth of several ages afterwards. Now therefore turn your eye, and see how God begun with man, how concerned for him, calling a council about making him: "Let us make man." With what a hand of art and skill he formed him curiously, fearfully, wonderfully; how being so formed, he breathed into him the breath of life, the lives of all the creatures, vegetative, sensitive, rational, and angelic, making him truly an abstract and compendium of the whole, a microcosm; how he stampt his own image upon him, and sealed him for himself, for his own converse and society; how he arrayed him with the robes of his own sovereignty, making him next himself, lord of all his works in the lower world: how he accommodated him, and made a garden of pleasure for him, stored with all delicious fruits, and so tender of his full satisfaction and content, that he considered his being alone, before he considered it himself, and that nothing might be wanting, made him a help-meet for him, giving him power by that means to increase and propagate himself into a multitude, as ample as might balance all other species.

Now was there love in all this or no? This was not to Adam alone, but to every one of us in him. I say, were these acts of love, or did God only make a flourish, and lay a snare for man, that forfeiting all these, he might be more miserable than if he had never been? If you say it was love, as I see not how it can be avoided, then did you think God began thus with man to end in a tempest? A tempest ensued, I grant, and lies still upon the greatest part of mankind, and a worse is reserved for them, as a just recompense of their deeds, even a fiery indignation, which shall destroy the adversary, as the apostle speaks, and make an end of the flesh, and so of sin, which what it means may be showed in its place.

But shall that bright sun of favour and love, that arose so splendidly on man, set in an everlasting cloud? (Ps. lxxvii. 8–10.) shall all those thoughts of God, whereof he gave an earnest to man in his first creation, perish? Shall the Lord lose his everlasting possession for ever? The same that is said of Christ, may be said of man in his root, and so of all men. The Lord possessed them in the beginning of his ways; the Lord had *livery* and *seisin* of them when there was no strange God among them, before ever sin, or law, whereby sin is imputed, did enter. Adam was first formed, saith the apostle, then Eve, and the man was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. The woman stands in Scripture for the natural principle, or fleshly image.

Sin, therefore, where it is founded, there it is also confounded, condemned to the flesh, and so alone poor fleshy man comes to know salvation through the sorrow of child-bearing, either born by Christ for us, which is the privilege of believers, or bearing their own iniquity as all others must do, to the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit, which is the seed, may rise. But before the woman was thus deceived, upon what amicable terms was God and Adam! How sweetly, as two that were perfectly agreed, did they walk together! Now God is one, and in one mind, though he may change his way, and use a suitable variety in that, yet if he begin in love, as here he did, surely he will not end in wrath; though the creature may apprehend God hath done with him, and will be merciful no more; yet it is not so, for as he is *Alpha*, so is he *Omega;* if his love were the first, certain it shall be last also: for who shall get the upper hand of that love which is God himself?

3. This oneness of God imports, that his wrath and love is one, but of this when we come to that Scripture where God is recognized by the name of love.

CHAPTER III.

Pursuing the same Text. An Argument from the Unity of the Mediator.

We come to the next words, which afford further evidence: "One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Here again men are recapitulated and headed in one, who is the Mediator of reconciliation, and of all communication of good from God to man, in whom, as such, all men have joint and equal interest. And the apostle saying "there is one Mediator of God and man," seemeth to import that originally the case is alike with all men, and so it is; all are children of wrath by nature, one as well as another, and he that pleads the cause of the elect, and the propitiation for their sins, he is the advocate of the rest also: and therefore if the cause of the elect succeeds and goes so well in his hands, it affords grounds of hope for the other also.

This unity of the Mediator is often reflected on, though in other words, as "one Lord," Eph. iv. 5; and "one head," Eph. i. 10. As was hinted before, touching which, this especially is to be further noted; that these *all* things here recapitulated, are distributively reflected on; both which are in heaven and which are on earth; which is not a local distribution, or a distribution of place, but of quality and condition. All the elect, and called ones are heavenly ones, 1 Cor. xv. The rest are earthly in this present state, yet these, as well as the others, are recapitulated or re-headed again in Christ, which relates to the first heading of them; which must also have been in *him*, for there was no other head of angels, or men originally, but He; he was that *Arche*, that head, which the fallen angels kept not, which our translators render their first state, but it may as well be rendered their beginning or head, from which they departed by disobedience, and fell.

Now mark here two things:

1. The argument the apostle is upon. And,

2. The aptness of the terms of the *medium* by which he would evince it. The argument is here praying for all men, the ground, God will have all men to be saved, the terms are general, all men are to be prayed for, not the elect only, but all men; none excepted in this place, nor in 1 John v. 16, only the sin unto death, which is not enjoined to be prayed for. Of that more hereafter.

2. Observe the validity of the terms of the *medium:* there is one God, that is unto all men still, all men have one God, an interest in this one God, and one Mediator between God and men; not between God and the elect, but between God and men. All that are men, (he is one, the Mediator between God and men): and,

Lastly, In the Mediator-ship of our Saviour, not the God-head, but the man-hood is reflected on, to suit the argument to pray for all men; the man Christ Jesus, this one Mediator, engages us to it.

The argument arising from the whole to the point in hand is this, that through the unity of the Mediator, all men are under a gracious counsel and design of salvation. We have seen before, how they all stand related to one God, as the creatures of that one God. God is the God of all men, but now they are nearer related, God is in Christ, become in personal union with the nature of man, in which all men have a common and joint interest, and so the persons of men, of all men, are in this their common representative, married to God; this is made out by these particulars.

1. God in Christ, hath espoused the nature of man, not the person of any man, but the nature, the seed of the woman; this reflects honour and privilege upon all that have interest in that nature. Gen. ix. 6, we read, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man." This is said after man was fallen, after that image was defaced, after that the old world was destroyed by the flood, for the lewdness and wickedness of it; yet that image of God, stampt on man in his creation, though but one man ever wore it in its freshness and beauty, pleads a privilege, becomes a security to all his fallen race, against violence to be offered to them. Sure then this relation, this union of our nature with God hypothetically in Christ, can never lose its force, its efficacy, but must stand in force for a higher security. The death of the body is but a prick of a pin to eternal death; shall God be so tender of man, to secure him from the less, and shall he not secure him much rather from the greater evil? Shall the first consideration and the relation of a creature, and the created image operate so far, and shall not this farther and higher relation of the essential image to our conjugal union, operate much stronger to the advantage of all the seed?

Col. i. 15. Next to the image of God, we

and the first-born of every creature, or of the whole creation, which must necessarily at least take in all men; the other creatures being virtually in man. But I say they are put together, the image of the invisible God and the *first-born* of every *creature*, that the glory of the latter may shine forth by the former, and might reflect glory on the whole creation round about: so that there is no man but this first-born is in him, for every creature by that Scripture hath his first-born, and that first-born is Christ, the image of the invisible God. The first-born of every creature, is not only the first-born of new creatures; the new creature implies a first creation before, and this first creature, nature, was found first in Christ, and he is the first-born in it, as well as the first begotten from the dead, and by his mediation other creatures are brought forth; so that Christ is the Mediator of the creation, the first creation as well as the new creation; and all men in their first creation, stand related to Christ as brethren: the first-born is the most worthy, and hath the double portion, is the excellency of dignity and of power, opens the womb, but they that come after have the same father, and issue out of the same womb.

The first-born in the first place, the other afterwards, which order of succession in the same progeny, infers not such a privilege and dignity to the first, as leaves the following race wholly abandoned and rejected, but at least in the families of men who have not enough to maintain the honour of their name; they must be recommended to the kindness and care of the first-born, which in this case, we may be secure of, though the father of this first-born is able to bless and provide most bountifully for his latter children, which all men you see are by their first creation, for we are also *his offspring*, as sings the poet, and the apostle disallows it not.

But it will be said this title fails, and this relation is dissolved and past away in Christ; men can claim nothing by it.

Answer. It is rather changed and swallowed up of a better to them that are new creatures in Christ, which is the truest sense of those words, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, all old things are past away," as the law is past away to those that are under grace; but the relation of creatures remains between God and all men, and will do so eternally; believers are therefore said to be a kind of first fruits of his creatures, which is in comparison with other men that are not believers; and we know what the apostle saith, "If the first-fruit be holy, the lump also is holy," and as the relation holds to God, so to Christ, if he be the first-born of every creature, all men are upon that account related unto Christ, and though there be a great difference between the first-fruits and other men, much more between the first-born and unregenerate men; yet there cannot be any privilege growing from hence, even to the worst of men, though while they are in unbelief and unregeneracy, they have no knowledge or sense of it. If this kindred, as I may call it, operates nothing, why doth the Lord own a philanthropy? How is it that the Lord lays such laws upon men, as on Israel for their poor brother, and under the New Testament, "that he that provides not for his family (not restraining it to believers) hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." The new creation is a design, an improvement, advanced upon the first creation; it is the first title improved by a better, not destroyed but cloathed upon, as the apostle speaks, as the tabernacle was housed in the temple; and so it must be in whomsoever are saved. Thus we see what light these words afford to our present inquiry. There is one Mediator.

CHAPTER IV.

Christ a Ransom for all, a Testimony for its Proper Season.

We come to the next, which relates to a new creation, "who gave himself a ransom for all." In this place, and upon this argument, to engage us to pray for all men, and that upon the following grounds, that God will have all men to be saved (can signify no less than general redemption) so far as that the price is laid down for all men, such a price as justice required, such as God accepted: for it is an actual ransom, which it could not have been called if the creditor had not been agreed, and declared himself satisfied therewith (a testimony for its proper time to be declared for all.) This ransom for all, is that which the mystical Jews can no more bear now, than the literal Jews could bear of the Gentiles to be taken into the covenant of Abraham, which might be the reason that the apostle closely insinuates in those words, (a testimony for its own proper times) as if he foresaw by the spirit, how the elder brother would grudge that the prodigal, after all his rambling, should find at last such a welcome entertainment; but yet the Scriptures of the New Testament are not wholly silent in other places touching this, Tit. ii. 11; chap iii. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 10; Rom. 5. 18; 1 John ii. 2. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." A text so worded, with *not only*, and *the whole world*, as if the Spirit had purposely consulted to obviate and prevent all clippings of it.

But to come to the argument: from hence it will be said, what, though Christ gives himself a ransom for all, we see yet all men, nay, the greatest part of men, have no benefit by it, but live and die unreconciled to God? It is confessed, and it is moreover certain, there is no other name given under heaven for men to be saved by: but because this redemption, this ransom operates not in the present time, have we authority to say it never shall? The blood of Christ never loses its virtue. The covenant with Abraham hath lain dead this seventeen hundred years and more, with the body of that nation, but yet it shall awake and work afresh, for the apostle saith, they

are beloved for their fathers' sake, and Christ saith, though Israel be not gathered, i. e. in the present time, yet a time is coming, as if he should say, when I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. Is. xlix. 5. He had said in the verse before, by way of objection, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength in vain, and for nought, but he answers himself, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." The apostle upon the argument of the resurrection, which he extends to all men, though not to all at first, but each in their order, and that making alive would be small comfort, if it were only a raising them to judgment, looks on it as so harsh a consequence, that Christ should die in vain, that he makes an argument of it: and I confess it is so harsh an hypothesis, that Christ should give himself a ransom for all, and that neither first nor last, the greatest part of men should have the fruit of it, that is, be set free by it, that without better reason than I yet see, I cannot admit it. He that forbids Israel to detain the wages of the hireling past the end of the day, will not surely deny Christ the price of his blood: but before he give up the kingdom, which is the end of his day, as Mediator, he shall see the full travail of his soul, and be satisfied. So that here we see man indefinitely designed for the advantages of this mediation, which is instituted between God and man, not between God and the elect, but between God and man: now an indefinite is equal to an universal. Then,

4. We see in executing this mediation, Christ gave himself a ransom for all, not restraining it to a part.

There are two more particulars which lie couched in this text.

1. That this ransom is that which all men have a share and interest in; for he gave himself, who was a public person, that took the nature of man; in which all men have joint interest; not the person of any man, not the property of any man; so that it was the life of the world that was offered up in sacrifice, the life of man in the person of the Son of God, ennobled and made valuable by the union, to be a ransom for all men; "therefore," saith the apostle, "if one died for all, then were all dead;" they were dead *criminally* in Adam, they were dead *penally* in Christ, else how could believers reckon themselves dead in him, if his death were not their death, sacramentally, as I may say, and so the death of all, though all receive it not, apprehended it not: therefore Christ saith, "The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

2. The second thing is the effect of this transaction, "and gave himself a ransom for all;" which is an advantage and benefit so large, so extensive, as is too great for the present faith of men; therefore it is said to be "a testimony for its proper times" or seasons, and what is the meaning of that? but although this extent of the ransom appear not now, and so the testimony of it cannot be received, which may be the reason why we have been so dark in it, yet there shall be times wherein it shall appear; and then, as is said of the vision, it shall be made plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it; in the mean time it is a mystery sealed up with a seal of secrecy, as that which the seven thunders uttered was, till the sounding of the seven trumpets; and as the vision of Christ's glory in the mount of transfiguration, which was enjoined to be told to no man till Christ should be risen from the dead, because Christ was yet in a state of humiliation: so the world is yet in an unreconciled state, and the time for this reconciliation to operate upon all, is not yet come, but only upon the elect; the rest as we shall see will follow in their order.

CHAPTER V.

An Argument from 1 Tim. iv. 10. God a Saviour of all, but in a more especial manner of them that believe the Gospel.

My second proof is from 1 Tim. iv. 10, where God is said to be the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe. The words are these; "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men," &c. I thought to have past by this Scripture, for that it may be apprehended to refer only to temporal salvation, but the context carries it further, for ver. 8, he speaks of the promise of this life, and that which is to come, which is annexed to godliness, and then ver. 9, saith, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, which is the same eulogy that he ushers in the Gospel with, chap. i. 15. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, whereof I am chief;" where undoubtedly he speaks of eternal salvation. The question is, what this μαλιστα imports, chiefly of them that believe; wherein it is, that some, even those that believe, have the advantage of the rest of men. Before we look farther, let us take what the place affords: we read, ver. 8, that godliness hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come; this is the advantage of believers above other men that are saved, which is commonly taken for the advantages of this world, but without ground; for the text contradicts this exception; for then what means the labour of the apostles, and their suffering reproach, if they had the promise of this life in that sense? It was a promise not performed to them who yet were eminent in godliness; therefore the promise of the life, (now) is such as Christ promises to them that forsake father and mother, house and lands for his sake, that they shall have an hundred fold in the present time with persecution. This hundred fold with persecution is in the spirit, and can be no otherwise, Mark x. 30. This promise they that believe not are deprived of, which is sufficient to ground that difference which the Greek word μαλιστα imports, in God's being the Saviour chiefly of them that believe that he is their Saviour.

They have the promise of the life that now

is, the others must stay for it; but they that believe are saved already, as unbelievers are condemned already, John iii. 18, yet God is the Saviour of all men; how this is, cannot be better expressed than by the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 22, where he speaking of the resurrection, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive, but every one in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming, then cometh the end." Where we have three seasons in which the resurrection is accomplished: First, in the rising of Christ the first fruits of the elect or believers: secondly, in the resurrection of believers; that are, as James saith, a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Then,

Thirdly and lastly, in the resurrection of the rest of men, for so and in this order shall the resurrection proceed: the dead in Christ shall rise first, and those that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him, not all the dead, but those that sleep in Jesus, so that great is the odds for believers above other men, for they are saved in the present time, or have the promise of the life that now is; that life in the spirit which is an hundred-fold beyond all the pleasures of sin, or bare temporal enjoyments of natural men. Then when they die they sleep in Jesus, in his bosom, until the resurrection; not that their souls sleep, or are sealed up in an inactivity, as their bodies in their graves; but they rest sweetly, as in the sweetest sleep from all that molested them here, both sin and sorrow, and are with Christ in Paradise.

And then thirdly, at Christ's coming their bodies are raised too, and they enjoy the kingdom with him during his whole reign, which the rest of men are excluded from, being not raised, as the creation is not delivered till the sons of God are manifested, Rom. viii. 19, 21, but answerably in a way of opposition and contradistinction; the rest of men, they are dead while they live, they go to hell when they die, and are not saved or made alive till Christ's kingdom on earth hath its accomplishment, which is called *the end*; "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father."

From all that hath been said, it appears, that this term, μελλει is not quiescent, idle, or insignificant, but importing a great difference between believers and others: yet not excluding the rest altogether, or for ever from salvation; nay, it strongly implies the contrary, it implies, that all are or must be saved in one degree or another, at one time or another.

CHAPTER VI.

Several Objections against this Hypothesis Answered.

But this truth (if so it shall prove after all is considered that may be alledged in the case) will pass the more current when we shall have solved all those harsh phenomena, which this assertion appears to be attended with; which province therefore might seem justly to challenge the precedency in this disquisition. I shall begin,

Object. 1. Shall all men be saved? What will become of the justice of God and his wrath against sin? This doctrine will take off all restraint from sinners, all encouragement to strict walking: if all should be saved, who would deny his flesh its cravings, its sensual satisfaction?

Answer, 1. This objection proceeds upon a grand mistake, if it be not wilful, viz. that the grace of God is a blind injudicious softness: which is a weakness in men, and is not once to be imagined of God, who is wisdom, truth, and holiness itself, and all these in highest consistency and harmony with grace and love, and even in the running over of his heart to his special favourites, all is under the conduct and management of highest prudence and wisdom. Eph. i. 8.

2. The Scriptures are not only plentiful in threatening, and denouncing death and wrath against sin, but in demonstrating to us,

1. The justice of this way of dealing with men, as wages is to a servant, "the wages of sin is death."

2. The naturalness and inevitableness of it, "that which a man soweth, that shall he also reap; be that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." &c. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." Yea,

3. The coincidence of sin and punishment in the same term of death, "to be carnally minded is death."

That there is an hell after this life, is clear by the doctrine of our Saviour himself in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 23; Matth. v. 22–29; ch. x. 28; ch. xviii. 9, and that from Christ's tribunal "all men shall receive the things done in their bodies, whether good or bad." The apostle Paul, without any hesitancy affirms, 2 Cor. v. 10, and that there shall be an exact proportion in the punishment to the sin, many places of the New Testament prove, Matth. x. 15; xi. 21–24; Rev. xx. 12, 13.

Object. But you will say, If hell be admitted you give up the cause. How are they saved that are cast into hell, "which is a fire that shall never be quenched," Mark ix. 43–48, and called "everlasting fire" in many places?

Answer. Let him that denies hell take heed lest it be verified upon himself; we have as much for hell as we have for heaven, only it may be questioned whether we understand those terms "for ever," yea, "for ever and ever," and "everlasting," and "never to be quenched," aright, for as much as these terms are used of things that have an end, as of the ordinances of the law, "this is an ordinance for ever," Exod. xxvii. last and divers other places, which yet had an end in Christ; so the Lord threatens, "that his fury shall burn upon Jerusalem, and shall not be quenched." Jer. vii. 20. Yet what sweet promises were made to Jerusalem, and to that people afterwards; and after this long rejection they are under the promise of a gracious return still, therefore these terms are to be understood in a limited or qualified sense; and if the everlasting duration of hell without end have no

other ground but those terms, it is too weak a foundation to build such an assertion upon, as concludes and shuts up God for ever in wrath, never to come forth in the exercise of mercy to far the greatest part of his creatures.

It is granted, those terms, "for ever" and "everlasting," import a long time, as Israel's ordinances lasted till Christ came, which was two thousand years.

2. That may be said for ever, whose term of ending is not revealed when it shall be.

3. What is after this life in another world, may be said to be for ever.

4. What is commensurate with the duration of the kingdom of the Son as Mediator, till he gives up the kingdom, may be said to be for ever; so the servants of God and the Lamb shall reign for ever and ever in the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxii. 5, which yet is to be given up to the Father when all enemies are put down under the feet of Christ.

5. Eternal judgment may be so said in three other respects. 1. Of God the inflictor. 2. On the soul on which it is inflicted, which is immortal. 3. Of the full accomplishment of its end, the full declaration of his justice, and the final extermination and making an end of sin, Jer. xxiii. 19, and last; "Behold the whirlwind of the Lord goes forth with fury, a continual whirlwind, it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked; the fierce anger of the Lord shall not return until he hath done it, and until he hath performed the intents of his heart," &c. "So, verily, thou shalt not come out thence until thou hast paid the utmost farthing."

I know what is commonly pleaded, that sin being against an infinite Majesty, satisfaction cannot be made, but by a punishment infinite in duration.

But this strikes at the sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction, in which God hath shewed there is a mean of satisfaction, without infinite duration, and God is satisfied by that one sacrifice for the sin of the whole world, so that God wants not satisfaction; besides that, if he did, he should by this principle, be ever satisfying, but never satisfied.

It is most certain, though Christ hath laid down a sufficient ransom for the whole world (and so intended by him) wherein God's justice is made amends for all the breach of his law, and he may now be just in forgiving the greatest sins and sinners, yea the whole world without exception, yet they that are not by special grace drawn to believe and receive this atonement, that are not influenced by this grace to deny ungodliness, that are not regenerated and born anew by the Spirit of God; they have not the benefit and advantage of this ransom, but must bear their own iniquity, shall die in their sins, and be cast into hell, where body and soul shall suffer in proportion to their demerits, and not come out thence until they have paid the utmost farthing.

But by our Saviour's own mouth there will be a great difference between some and others, even in those that perish; and if it be more tolerable for some than others, then we may draw an argument from hence, for the bounding the duration of the punishment of the damned, by the same rule of justice as proportions the degrees of punishment to the sin; for if the infiniteness of the Majesty offended, requires the punishment of the offender, infinite in duration, doth it not require it should be intensely exquisite also; therefore that infiniteness of the Majesty offended is not the rule; but the reception of the light of this Divine Majesty, where it hath been more or less, that is the rule; "for," so saith the apostle, "they that have sinned without law, shall be judged without law, and they that have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law, and they that sinned under the Gospel, and against the Gospel, shall have the hottest judgment of all." See Heb. x. 26–30. To shut up this matter there are two things in judgment that make it more or less tolerable; the intenseness of it, and the extent or duration of it. The furnace was commanded to be heated seven times hotter than ordinary, for the three children; that was the intenseness of the torment; now one or both of these must of necessity be understood in the tolerableness of Tyre and Sidon's judgment before Capernaum and Bethsaida; and if you say the former, that the heat of their fire is not so intense, you then yield the cause, for their sins were against an infinite Majesty, therefore if that were the rule and measure of the punishment, their punishment must be as intolerable as any others; yea, indeed as intolerable as an infinite God could make it; but the creature is not capable of such a wrath; for *quicquid recipitur, recipitur ad modum recipientis*, a finite thing cannot hold an infinite, therefore they which are most enlightened, are capable of most wrath; which is the meaning of that passage, Ps. xc. 11, according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. A poor dull heathen who was never awakened to a sense of God, is not capable of that wrath that those are who have lived under the sun-shine of the Gospel. Therefore Christ took in more of the wrath of God than all men and angels put together could have done, because he took in the fulness of his love. He lay in his bosom and therefore he had a quicker and more exquisite sense of his wrath, and so they that sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of truth, O! what a fiery judgment is that which awaits them! for they have come near to God, they have tasted the good word of God, they have felt the sweetness of communion with God, (next to new-covenant communion) they have eaten and drank in his presence; how terrible will the sense of rejection be to such! Indeed, they that have the coldest hell will find it hot enough, yea, hotter than they can bear, without most great and extreme sense of torment, double to all the pleasures of sin, and of their own will, which have brought this torment on them; for this is the proportion and measure, Ex. xx. 4, 5; Jer. xvi. 18; xvii. 18; Rev. xviii. 6, and as for punishment so for reward, Is. xl. 2; lxi. 7. To conclude. In vain is it said, men shall be judged according to their *works*, and it shall be more tolerable for some than others, if the utmost

wrath, that an infinite God can inflict, shall be poured upon all the punished *ones;* and if not utmost, in respect of intention, then not endless, in respect of extension, but proportionable to their *works*.

CHAPTER VII.

The Opening of that Scripture, 1 Pet. iii. 18–20, for the Further Illustrating of this Argument, and the Answer unto the Former Objection, that from Hell there is no Redemption.

The words of the text, 1 Pet. iii. &c., are these: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit: in which also going forth, he preached to the spirits in prison; which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was in preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water," &c. Compare this Scripture with that which you will find chap. iv. ver. 6: "For this cause was the Gospel preached also (or even) to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." And if it be found that the Gospel is preached to the damned, and for this end, that through a judgment administered on the flesh, they must be brought forth to a life in the Spirit, as these Scriptures seem to hold forth; then not only is this objection answered, but the main assertion of universal grace is justified; for there can be no question of the possibility or probability of the salvation of other sinners, if the sinners of the old world be saved, and of sinners in the flesh, if the damned in hell be redeemed and fetched out from thence. For of these doth both of these texts speak: the former is without question, and the latter text being but six or seven verses removed from the former, may be presumed not to be alien in sense. But besides, it is clear the discourse is continued throughout these verses, and the argument not altered or changed, and therefore I shall spend no time to clear that which is so clear to any one that reads the text. All the question will be, what time this going forth of Christ to preach to the old world (who were now gone off the stage, and were only spirits uncloathed of their mortal bodies and in prison) was? whether while on earth before the flood came upon them and swept them away, or whether it were after our Saviour's death or resurrection, rather during those forty days before his ascension, answering the forty days and forty nights that it rained upon the earth: viz. whether this preaching was the preaching of Noah in his time, who is called the preacher of righteousness by this apostle, in his second epistle, chap. ii. 5, or of our Saviour in person? I confess I have formerly endeavoured to persuade myself upon that ground, viz. that Noah is so recognized, that it was Christ, in the spirit of his mediatory person and office, going forth in Noah, in the days of warning before the flood, that was meant in the first quotation of this apostle, chap. iii. 19, but there are several particulars in that text, besides the cogent arguments in the latter text, chap. iv, 6, which have a manifest connexion and dependency with the former, and relation to it, which sways me to the contrary, and being in harmony with so many other texts of Scripture, makes it more than probable, that Christ carried the Gospel in person, to the spirits of the old world, after his resurrection, to judge and to save them: let us consider the particulars distinctly in both texts:

1. It cannot be Noah, or his preaching, that is there meant, or Christ preaching in Noah; for the time, the state, the place, the auditory, the success, and other circumstances, all forbid such an interpretation.

1. The time was after our Saviour's suffering, that is plain, ver. 18, for Christ hath once suffered for sin, being put to death in the flesh, &c. It was after the days of our Saviour's flesh, but Noah's preaching was before his coming in the flesh; this is the first argument.

2. It was in the state of the life that he took up from the dead by the resurrection that he went forth and preached, which is called *spirit* in the end of ver. 18, in which he is said to go forth in ver. 19, which is not that state of spirit in which Christ was before he was incarnate; but it is the spiritual state of his humanity in the resurrection; that's a second argument. To which add, if the apostle had here made it his design to show, that Christ went forth in spirit before he took flesh, he might have instanced in all the prophets, and needed not to have taken such a leap over all their heads to the old world; he might have been furnished with instances nearer hand than Noah. Therefore this is a ministry of the person of Christ, of the spiritual state of his person in the resurrection; this is the preacher.

3. The place. The Greek words import a travel or journey to some distant place or region, being used afterwards, ver. 22, of this chapter, for his ascending to heaven. This is a travel to the place of the damned, where they are in prison, wherever that is. Whether that place of his descending to the utmost parts of the earth, Eph. iv. 9, make any thing to this purpose, I shall not determine, but leave to be considered; but if this be so that Christ did withdraw from the converse of the living, to the place of the dead, then we have an account of our Saviour's time, from the resurrection to his ascension, whereof so little was bestowed in visits on his disciples, the time being taken up in evangelizing or preaching the Gospel to the dead, as chap. iv. 6, that which is called only preaching in the first place, chap. iii. 19, is in the latter called preaching the Gospel; in the first place a preaching to the spirits in prison, in the latter evangelizing to the dead. This was not the preaching of Noah in the flesh.

4. The auditors, who are not men in the flesh, but the dead in the latter place: and lest that should be taken metaphorically or mystically for the dead in trespasses and

sins only, it is over-ruled in the former place by the appellation of spirits, that is, such as had laid down the body, and were then those spirits in prison, such as were descended and sent to their own place, there to be kept in prison to the day of their judgment, which here seems to be the time of Christ's resurrection, which is the beginning of the day of judgment. For Christ's resurrection was the notice and assurance that was given to all men, of his being appointed to judge the world in righteousness, and of that day being come, Acts xvii. 31; Heb. ix. 27, which may answer the objection of the day of judgment being one continued day, which Heb. vi. 2, is called "the eternal judgment." So soon as men die they come to judgment, but there are special seasons for signal and eminent judgments. Yet all one judgment continued, and eternal in the spirit, though not alike manifest always, Rev. xv. 4. The time from Christ's resurrection to his ascension, was the time for the judgment of the old world; the appositeness of which time may appear from hence, because now was the new world brought to light actually, which began from finishing of the judgment of the flood. That judgment was absolved in forty days from the resurrection of Christ. Now this preaching being to the dead properly, not metaphorically, not to men in the flesh, but to spirits in prison, cannot be the preaching of Noah, but must be the preaching of Christ to a world of men that were gone off the stage of this world. This is a fourth argument.

5. The success. Noah's preaching was fruitless; the old world was disobedient, and perished under his preaching; but there is a strong intimation, as if the preaching of Christ had better success, because it is said of this auditory, that they were some time disobedient, and as if now they were not; but this is not all, the fruit is plainly expressed in the latter place; for this cause the Gospel was preached even to them that were dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but that they might *live* according to God in the spirit. That work which the Gospel prevails for where it is received by faith, Christ in his risen state effects that by new accession of power he had received according to his own acknowledgment in several places. Matt. xxviii. 18; John xvii. 2.

And whether the "leading captivity captive," spoken of Eph. iv. at his ascension, and "giving gifts to men," even to the rebellious, those rebels of the old world, those giants that made war with heaven, "that the Lord God might dwell among them," Ps. lxviii. may not look this way, I shall leave to be considered. It is usual among men, when kings are inaugurated or installed in their kingdoms, to open the prison doors, and set free the captives. This is a fifth argument, concluding against the preaching of Noah, to be the intent of the apostle, which is yet made stronger by the apostle in the first quotation of Peter, where speaking of the flood, as a baptism of *salvation* in the light side of it, though a baptism of *judgment* to the greater part, there being few, but only eight souls saved by water, he makes the *antitype* to be the resurrection of Christ from the dead: who therefore must in a correspondent way *save* as well as *judge*, and especially we may be bold to conclude so, when the Scripture goes before us, and acquaints us with the ministry he exercised in person, in this risen state, and the subjects to whom he preached, and also the end of it, that they might not only be judged according to men in the flesh, but might live according to God in the spirit. The salvation now by this baptism, is an earnest of the universal salvation, according to the commission given him, or that he sees ready to be given him upon his suffering, at his resurrection, which is by himself said to be a *power* over all flesh, John xvii. 2, a term excluding all, or any exception or limitation. The place we shall reflect upon more particularly hereafter.

6. There are two or three other circumstances that will add to the clearing of this exposition, and take away some objections that may possibly lie in some minds against what hath been declared. As,

First, the adverb, ποτὲ, or sometimes, applied to the disobedience of the old world, which shows their disobedience, and this preaching to them, not to be of the same time, and so not to be the preaching of Noah.

Again, the adverb ἅπαξ, or once, that is applied to the expectation of the Lord's long-suffering, shows the expectation to have been of a former time antecedent to this preaching; and so it could not be the preaching of Noah, which did contemporate with that expectation again.

Thirdly, while Noah preached, and this long-suffering of God expected them, they were not spirits, but men in the body; and not in prison, but at liberty in this world; not dead, but alive in the flesh.

Fourthly, and so to obviate an objection, if the meaning had been, that Noah preached then to men in the flesh, who since that are now spirits in prison, would he not have as accurately distinguished the times of the one and the other, and have made it clear that they were not spirits in prison then, as he doth in the two places to distinguish their disobedience, and God's expecting their compliance from that time of this preaching, of which he treats, by the adverbs *pote* and *apax*.

Fifthly, that particle (also) chap. iv. 6. "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead," must needs mean the dead properly; being so over-ruled by the sense of the terms in the verse immediately preceding, where he speaks of Christ *ready*, viz. "now from his resurrection ready to judge the quick and the dead;" and then,

Lastly, What should the apostle mean by saying, the Gospel *was* preached in the *preterense*, if it were not that he spake of an action past, viz. in that forty days from the resurrection of our Saviour, to his ascension; for if he had intended and spake of the preaching of the Gospel to the mystical dead, that are living on earth, by the ministers of Christ, he would most probably, because most properly, have spoken in the present time (it is preached) for so then it was when he wrote, and

continues to this day, more or less: therefore it is most probable he spake of an action that was past, even the same that he had written of in the former chapter, which adds some further light and evidence to this exposition, and understanding of the text.

To conclude this text, and the evidence from it, let it be observed against the slighting of sin, and the judgment it brings on the sinner, that it was above two thousand years, by the computation of the best chronologers, that speak least, from the flood to the times of our Saviour: and all that time were the spirits of the old world in prison. What profit had they of six or seven hundred years spent in vanity, to lie three thousand years for it, as some of the earliest of them did, if they were delivered at the resurrection of Christ, or by the efficacy of his preaching to them that forty days after it before his ascension? And it is seventeen hundred years and more since that time, that the sinners of the new world have expected the fiery indignation; which how long it shall burn upon them in and during the reign of Christ in his kingdom, I see not how to determine: but the duration already, and the certainty of every one's receiving according to his work, by unimaginable decrees exceed the shortness and momentariness of the pleasures of sin, that are but for a season.

CHAPTER VIII.

An Argument drawn from the Mercy promised the Jews.

Next to the damned in hell is the case of the Jews on earth, for deplorableness both in respect of sin and misery. The *depth* of their misery is estimated by the *height* of their privileges, being once the only church and people of God, but now the most forlorn and wretched people on earth, and so have been seventeen hundred years and more; lying under rejection for that great sin of crucifying and rejecting Christ, which was done by their fathers, and is owned and not repented of by their children to this day; not to speak of the ten tribes, which from the days of Salmanezar were carried captive, and remain an unknown nation, without prince or government to this day; yet what gracious and full promises are made to this people, both to Israel and Judah, not only of gathering and raising them again, as under David and Solomon, and bringing them back to their own land; but spiritual promises of life and salvation, and such an incorruptible glory in the glorious state of Christ's kingdom at his return in his second appearance, as shall make that time exceed any time that the Gentile churches have yet known, as much as the light of the sun exceeds that of the moon.

Having glanced at this argument already, upon occasion given before by the argument drawn from the harmony that is in God's counsel and design, I shall be the briefer on it, and shall only glean a few reflections that remain on some passages in Rom. ix. where the apostle spends the whole chapter on this argument, that God hath not finally cast off the Jews, but upon design for a *time* to receive them again with greater kindness than ever before.

I shall begin, ver. 11: "I say then," saith the apostle, "have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid, but rather through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy." O eagle-eyed apostle! how were thine eyes anointed with the divine eye-salve, to espy any good, to discern so great a counsel of good, in and through so dark a scene as this of the Jews rejecting of Christ, and their being for that rejected by God! it was as great a sin, as great a fall as ever men were guilty of. Indeed all were but peccadillos to this sin of their denying and crucifying of their own Messiah, yet this stumble the apostle will not have to be *that they might fall.* What a full, what a pregnant testimony is this to what we said before, that the design of wrath is *intermediate,* not *ultimate;* God hath a design of grace beyond his design of wrath, and that not to the Gentiles only, "to whom through their fall, salvation," he saith, "is come," but to the Jews themselves, after that, to provoke them to jealousy, to make them come in with a stomach to Christ. Yes, this is not the whole of the project neither, but there is a further part of it reacheth beyond this receiving in again, and there the Gentiles are to reap the advantage; for, "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" So again, ver. 15, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" O how full of light is this part of God's counsel! which otherwise, take it alone, is as dark as any text to the state of the damned in hell! How doth this cloud clear up! What an innocency, what a serenity appears in the original plot and conduct of all this darkness that is to end so blessedly, both to Jews and Gentiles!

The apostle hath not done with it yet, but is at it again, ver. 22, and I cannot blame him, it is so full, and such a pleasing wonder. Behold therefore, saith he, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell severity; but towards thee goodness, &c. The apostle James saith, "out of the same fountain proceeds not sweet water and bitter," yet here is severity and goodness exercised by the same God. What must we conclude then? that his severity is not without goodness, nor contrary to it; not incompatible with it; his goodness can admit severity and yet remain goodness notwithstanding; how doth this still arride, and confirm that account before given, *a love design,* or project, a *mask of love,* a *love dance?* We have here, divine love takes out the Jews alone, and leads them about for the space of two thousand years from Abraham, then he looseth hands with them, and takes the Gentiles for near as long, and the Jews sit by. Here severity comes in and acts its part to make that scene full and glorious; severity waits upon goodness,

The Jews, the blessed seed of Abraham, his friend, are shut out, and their rejection must be a foil to set off the favour of these *new espousals to the Gentiles*: but the Gentiles also are corrupt and become an earthly Jerusalem, and they are turned off; and therefore there is another scene at last to be presented, and that is, the "fulness of the Gentiles," and "the fulness of the Jews," which are both to come in together, ver. 25. Here now both the beloveds are taken in and made one, never to be cast off more, "and so all Israel shall be saved," ver. 26. But this is not all neither; the apostle hath another essay at it in order to show the peculiar turn of art and skill of the great contriver, ver. 30, 31, and that is, to present the part that unbelief bears, in this scene, and how the unbelief of the Jews commends the mercy the Gentiles found, who obtained "mercy through their unbelief." That the unbelief of one people should be the believing of another, admits great allay in the severity: but that the mercy of the latter people, the Gentiles, should at last issue in the mercy of the elder people, the Jews, "who through our mercy shall receive mercy;" this wholly excuses and absolves God's contrivance of all cruelty and injustice, and shows it to be only the ingenuity and wisdom of love. But there is one strain more, ver. 36, the last of this chapter, where the apostle having admired the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, the unsearchableness of his judgments, and the insorutableness of his ways, concludes, "that of him, and through him, and unto him are all things," the rejoicing as well as embracing, the judgment as well as the mercy; the severity as well as the goodness; and therefore, saith he, "to him be glory for ever." This makes all good, all glory; all to be but a project of love and of glory. Evil proceeds from evil, as Abigail saith to David; but from God who is light, pure unmixt light, in whom is no darkness; from God who is love, love without allay, nothing can proceed but what is like himself; all is here but the seat of the variegation, the pleasant disports and garnishing of a project and design of love; which in the close, and not till then, will present itself unspeakably beautiful and glorious, through all these interchangeable courses of lights and shades, so skilfully and advantageously displaying themselves into one entire light of glory, where the darkness itself shall in the design become a light, and every spot a beauty, to and in the whole piece.

Obj. But how doth such an account of things comport with the wrath of God, expressed all manner of ways, through all the Scriptures, through all times and ages against sin; forbidding of it, threatening of it, complaining of it, judging and punishing men for it, with such fierceness, with such seriousness? Doth not the apostle say, "we knowing the terrors of the Lord persuade men," and it is fearful to fall into the hands of the living God; yea, when he speaks to believers themselves, doth he not tell them, our God is a consuming fire? But by this account of your's, God shall seem *personam induere*, to act the part, and not to be in earnest, to put on a disguise only for a time; doth not this invalidate all his threats and denunciations against sin?

Answer. I shall answer with a God forbid! How then shall God judge the world? what shall he ground his judgment upon in sending men to hell and holding them there, for so long continuance under such exquisite wrath and torment, if sin be not a real evil and demerit? And as for wrath, men under terror of conscience feel it real; and would God sport himself with the suffering and smart of his creatures, if he was not really concerned in his justice to deal so with them?

This course of things therefore hath its place in the first and natural relation, wherein God and the creature stand *apart singly* and at a distance, upon a distinct bottom and interest; but there is *another day*, another *light of things* brought forth in Christ, wherein God and the creature meet and are one, and wherein God immutably relieves and fixes the creature's mutability, and waveringness; his righteousness clothes, covers, smiles upon the creature's nakedness, unrighteousness and sin; here "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other;" yea, mercy rejoices against judgment, and in this light of things it is, God speaks so lightly of sin, and lighter than we durst do, did not he go before us in it, Isa. i. 18: "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red as crimson they shall be as wool." The Septuagint is more emphatical, making it the *act* of God cleansing them; λευκανῶ.

More is not said of the saints' robes, than is here said of their sins, "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Rev. vii. 14. What is whiter than snow, what is softer than wool, yet what is blacker than sin, and what harder than iniquity? What a *power* therefore of love, of life, of righteousness, must that be, that can make such a change? This is that which in Psalm cxviii. 23, 24, is celebrated with such praise, "this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes; this is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoice therein."

For the further account hereof take these following particulars.

1. It must be true, God hath put on *another person* in Christ, and sits upon *another throne;* the *Judge* is changed, and his throne is changed from a tribunal of justice, to a throne of grace; but this change of his person and *aspect*, makes not his first appearance under the law, and in wrath feigned as passions in a play are. For sin and righteousness are as light and darkness: the holy nature of God, and the fallen nature of the creature, remaining so at an irreconcilable distance. And upon this account we hear of *eternal judgment*, everlasting and unquenchable fire; because this judgment, this fire never ceases burning upon sin, and upon the sinner, while he remains *in his own life*, which is enmity to God; in which *sense* the law is said to have dominion over a man so long as he

liveth, viz. until he be mystically slain, and then that dominion determines. And therefore,

2. In the second place, it is not without great and good cause, that the Lord puts on *another person*, that we find his person; his aspect, his appearance, so quite different from what it was, his frowns turned into smiles, his rebukes into embraces; that he changes his voice, and speaks so calmly, so undisturbed of the great provocations of his people. It is that *vast improvement* which God makes to the glory of all his attributes, and his grace eminently and ultimately by occasion of the fall, through the means of Christ, who is his arm in his design and counsel; it is the pleasure of this game, or divine project, that doth so please, and influence the Lord, as the prophet saith, "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake;" for in this way of Christ he hath not only a full amends made for the breach of his law, and for all the sin and disobedience of men, (and that both by the fulfilling of it, and satisfying the penalty) but the old man is crucified, and the body of sin destroyed, and the state of all that believe fundamentally and substantially changed; and they made a clean new creation; they are not in the flesh, but in the spirit; they are taken up out of the first Adam, and planted in the second Adam, and are "as him, even in this world." So that now the wrath of God having discharged itself on Christ in his sufferings, way is made for that glory which is *dearest to God* of all his names, *his grace*, which all his other attributes do attend upon, and serve to the displaying itself in the freest and most unlimited, uncontrolled way that his heart can desire. Now in the *might of this salvation* he rejoices over his poor smitten creatures with joy; he rests in his love; yea he joys over them with singing, Zep. iii. 17, and calls them to rejoice with him. This project he had always in prospect, which made the Lord Jesus "his delight in eternity," Prov. viii. upon the account of his serviceableness to him in this design: but it was sparingly discovered unto men, until these last times; for though the promise was before the law, yet the law and wrath must enter to be a foil unto it; even as *first* is that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual, saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 46; and it is but darkly we yet see this, to what God sees, and to what we shall see when He, even the *Lord Jesus* shall appear, when we shall see God as he is, face to face.

So that it is in another light than the light of man, that these things are seen and are true; whoever is not in some measure taken into this light "abideth in death and wrath abideth on him." This glorious scope and counsel of God, the apostle lays open at large, in Rom. v. in two instances, as two gradual steps of it. First. In the entrance of sin by Adam. Secondly. In the *reviving* and *abounding* of sin by the law. First, for Adam, he makes a *parallel* between the first and the second Adam, showing wherein they agree, and wherein they differ; they agree in this, that Adam was a head, and representative to all his *seed*, as Christ is; thoug was but a subordinate head; yet he figure of him that was to come. S They agree in this, that the seed Adams were to be ruled by the fate several *heads and representatives*, and For as, the first Adam falling, we v reckoned to fall in him, which is the n of that ver. 12, "for as by one man sin into the world, and death by sin, and s passed upon all men," viz. in Adam i all sinned, and accordingly death from Adam to Moses; he bounds it not that it reigned no more, or did n afterwards; but he distinguishes, as above, between the reign of sin before which was but a diminutive reign, i parison with the reign of sin by th when sin abounded and revived; comparatively was not imputed, viz. upon the conscience before the law, a afterwards; the reddition of this par not in the text, but may be supplied ou context, viz. "that even so righteousn tered by one, and life by righteousnes

But now the difference between the he brings in with a *much more*, ver. 1 not as the offence, so also is the free if, through the offence of one, many b *much more* the grace of God, and the grace hath abounded unto many." I concieve other meaning of it than this there is much more in the heart of make men righteous by the second without their own personal merit, t make men sinners by the first Adam their personal demerit. Where you s grace hath the preference in the pl hath a design to show his wrath, and t his *power* known but much more to his grace.

2. The second difference, is in the rison instituted between *the one sin o* charged upon all his seed, and the *ab* of Christ's *righteousness* imputed to h It was but one slip, one transgressic that was the eating of the forbidde that all mankind smarts for to this is true their own sins inflame the recl but they are dead and condemned Adam, by that *one sin*, had he or we sinned more.

But now Christ performed many obedience; yea, he was all righteou therefore our many offences are fo and they "who receive abundance of and the gift of righteousness, shall r life by one man Jesus Christ," ver. 16, ver. 18, the apostle extends the respe relation of this *to all men*; "therefore, he, "as by the offence of one judgmen upon all men to condemnation, even so righteousness of one the free gift cam all men unto justification of life;" wl to my general argument, though not particular scope. Here I grant the w the Greek are defective, yet as to the p they are full enough. There is one upon all men to condemnation, a righteousness of one upon all men to cation. Though it is true none but that lay hold of it have the benefit of

it was a price paid for all; and that many other Scriptures do attest. And therefore the *many* in the next verse is not a bounding, a restraint, or limitation of the scope and intention of Christ's death; but if it respect that, it is equivalent to the *all* before; else it should be less than the severity, for all died in Adam, and therefore the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 22, saith, "In Christ shall all be made alive." For as the design for the manifesting of grace, is much more designed of God, and the grace and righteousness of the second Adam, is much more than the sin of the first, so the extent of it, with respect to the *subject* that reaps the benefit of it, it is not probable should be fewer or less. For though many are not always all, yet all are always many; but if it be to be understood only of some, not all, then it respects the present actual participation of the benefit of the sacrifice, by the many that do believe. This is the first instance.

2. The second, is of the reviving, of the abounding of sin by the law, for so the apostle, speaking of the times before the law in his own person, saith, "I was alive once without the law," though, as a worthy author lately hath writ, it may be carried higher also, even to Adam in paradise, viz. men were comparatively alive; sin sat not so heavy on the conscience before the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; this is the abounding of sin by the law, whereof he speaks, ver. 20. Thus moreover, (that is as much as to say, I have done with Adam, and the derivation of sin and death from him to his posterity, before the law; but the tide is not at the full till the law entered, men knew not, felt not its utmost smart and misery till then) "the law entered that sin might abound." Is this a counsel for the good God to own, to exaggerate sin upon the consciences of poor sinners? Read on and you will see; "but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The law wrought to grace, and grace reaped the advantage of all the wrath that the law wrought; "that as sin hath reigned unto death," it hath reigned, viz. it hath had its reign; sin is served, it hath had its time; therefore now it must give place to grace: "so might grace reign through righteousness to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Grace sweeps the stakes of all you see at last. Now if sin and wrath had not been *real*, then the glory of grace had been but a *pageant*; therefore let us take heed of that; it was as real as the nature of God, and the nature of the creature in his first make, could make it; but as real as it is, God hath a power to destroy, and null, and make it void, as if it had never been; and will do so, which makes the apostle sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord; who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," beginning first with the law, abolishing that after he had *fulfilled it*; and so destroying sin out of the conscience, both from reigning there by guilt to condemnation, and destroying the power of lust and corruption out of the heart and members. Now as this is the counsel of God *in the law* to enhance and raise grace by the abounding of sin, so this is his counsel in all his *economy*, and the government of his great family in the whole world, in all his *providential dispensations*; and therefore we find how sweetly he closes after all his denunciations of severity and judgment to the people of the Jews by the prophets, he ends with promises of mercy and grace, and those *exceeding their punishment*, as it were easy to instance throughout the prophets; yea, many of the *nations* that God sent his prophets to threaten and to judge, he makes promises to visit them with mercy and deliverance afterwards; thus to Egypt, Jer. xlvi. 28, to Moab, chap. xlviii. 47, to Amnon, chap. xlix. 6, to Elam, chap. xlix. last, so Isa. xix. 18, and ver. 25, to Sodom and Samaria, Ezek. xvi. 53, 67, and to Esau, Gen. xxvii. 40 Now is God thus gracious, and doth he deal thus *in the way*, while the nations are in the heat of their sins and provocations, while the seasons of wrath and judgment properly is, and while Christ hath not yet actually by his life, and by that power which he hath given him, reigned so powerfully, as to bring into effect all those glorious advantages of his death, as he will before the end; (for he must reign till all enemies be put under his feet); and will not that *end*, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even his Father, when he shall have destroyed all the works of the devil, be solemnized and celebrated with the acts of the greatest and most universal grace? Consider of it.

CHAPTER IX.

A further Argument from the Universality of the Subject to whom the Gospel is sent forth to be preached.

The texts that show this are Col. i. 23; Matt. xxviii. 19, and Mark last, and last ver.; Rev. xiv. 6; Eph. i. 10; chap. iii. 9; Col. i. 20; Tit. ii. 11. The first of these places Col. i. 23, speaking of that Gospel whereof Paul saith he "was made a minister," affirms it was preached to "every creature under heaven," a term large enough, yet no larger than the commission and charge was from our Saviour's own mouth in the two next places of Matthew and Mark; in the first of which he enjoins them "to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in this light of salvation," for so it is called *sprinkling*, Isa. lii. 15, which by the words following is interpreted of the *rain of knowledge*, as knowledge and doctrine is elsewhere resembled to rain and dew, Deut. xxxii. 2. With this light they were "to baptize all nations," not in their own name, or of their own good-will only, "but in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," a name and authority, sufficient to bear them out; and in the latter of these two evangelists it is more emphatically expressed: "Go ye into all the world, and

preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." I expect it will be here said, the Gospel carries forth *damnation* as well as salvation; which is most true, and more terrible damnation *than the law*: but this opposeth not what we say, nor do we deny this, but more of this in its place. These Scriptures show Christ's *commission*, and the apostle's execution.

The next Scripture shows it to be so *again* towards the fall of Babylon. The words are these: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue, and people;" with which agrees that in Rev. i. "Every eye shall see him, and all the tribes and kindreds of the earth, shall wail because of him;" which in Zachary is likened to the mourning for an only son, or for a first-born, which is a mourning of *compunction*, not of *desperation*, as if towards the end, the Gospel, which had been pinioned and straightened by the churlish dispensers or monopolizers rather of it, as Isaiah calls them, chap. xxxii. 5–7, should recover its wings, and fly abroad, according to its *first frankness* and largeness.

Now to draw our argument from these Scriptures, before we come to the others, which are of another class, the Gospel is sent into all the world, and commanded to be *preached to all nations, to every creature under Heaven*, and this in the name of the whole Trinity. What is this Gospel? The apostle gives us the proper character of it, Acts xx. 24, calling it the "Gospel of the grace of God," and so in several other places, "the word of his grace," ver. 32, of this chapter, and chapter xiv. 3. But what is the word, what are the tidings, the good tidings of this grace? See Tim. i. 15, "that Christ came into the world to save sinners, yea the chief of sinners; this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation." This is that that answers, that balances the ill tidings of Adam's fall, that lost us all; and nothing but such a thing as this can answer and balance it. This is to be preached to all the world, and every creature. "So God loved the world." "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." "The bread that I will give is my flesh, that I will give for the life of the world." He that believes not this shall be damned. This is the sanction of the holy Gospel, it is to be believed on the pain of damnation. Is it not then a truth that Christ died for all men, (not a truth by inference, but by the express assertion of Scripture, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15,) and gave himself a ransom for all men, paid the price of all men's redemption, not one excepted? Then it is not true that Christ died only for the elect, and that the Gospel is only sent to them, and only *propounded* indefinitely, but *intended* only to the *elect*, who are secretly guided to lay hold upon it, and to believe; for it is true of Judas, and of the veriest reprobate, that Christ died for him *intentionally*, as well as the choicest saint; and it is not for want of a part in Christ's blood allotted him of grace, but for not believing it, that he is damned. It were no ways congruous or agreeable to the righteousness and justice of a holy God, the Judge of all the earth, to damn men for not believing that which doth not belong to them, or to which they have no right, no claim, no interest lawfully given and conferred upon them; for not believing the Gospel, which belongs to other men, and not to themselves. Therefore every man, as a man, as the son of Adam, *reprobate* as well as *elect*, hath a share and interest in the redeeming blood of the Son of God, and may assume and say truly, Christ died for him, and is the propitiation for his sin, and hath borne his iniquity, and the chastisement of his peace was upon Christ, else there is no Gospel preached to every creature. Now therefore here is the argument, if Christ died for all men, and this is the Gospel, then he is the Saviour of all men; and if he be the Saviour of all men, then there is no man but first or last must partake of the fruits and advantages of this death, otherwise Christ *died in vain;* as to the most of men Christ's travail miscarries. He died for all, but saves but few. Yet we say, and it is most true, that his blood is so precious, that *one drop of it* is of more value than the whole world, being the blood of God. Acts xx. 28. Therefore we conclude, that the damnation of men, for not believing, how long, how grievous soever (as it is both) and that which is unexpressible, weighs down all the pleasures of sin. Yea, the whole world is not worth, nor can compensate the loss of a soul; yet it must not, it cannot *finally* and *for ever* prevent them of partaking of the benefit. It is but a *sanction* of the Gospel. Now the sanction of a law, is a confirmation of it, not the frustration of it. And this is the utmost the apostle speaks of the worst and highest offenders against the Gospel, even of wilful sinners and apostates, Heb. x. 26, to 30. "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God," &c. So that when this punishment hath had its course, (as its course it must have, and it is bounded) grace shall return to its course, as the waters of Jordan did when Israel was passed over: else grace should be frustrated after great cost, such as the whole world cannot balance, and be defeated for ever: which is a consequence not once to be imagined, viz. that grace, which is the choice, the supreme glory of God, the word, that he hath magnified above all his names, should be thus muffled up and disappointed. Nay rather, this damnation of those that believe not, is for the *ratification*, the confirmation of this Gospel and grace of God, and the illustration of the glory of it; being the punishment of not believing it; it is the vengeance *of grace;* grace must not therefore destroy itself by its own vengeance: for why is the vengeance, but for the resisting and refusing of grace? therefore when grace hath taken vengeance, it must break forth again, *and cast up the cloud*. And thus the Lord gives us a little model of his plot in that particular dispensation of his

to Israel, Isaiah xxx. 15, to whom he said, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength, but ye would not; yet ye said no, for we will flee upon horses. Will ye!" saith God, "and ye shall flee till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill;" desolate enough, and this for not believing. But shall this be *for ever?* Mark the next words, "And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him." The Lord is a God of judgment, and therefore knows when to have done; he waits to be gracious, he longs to be at that work. Which seems to be the meaning of those words we meet with, Rom. ix. 22: "What, if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, &c. As if the suspension of himself from the exercise of this grace, were great long-suffering. For this enduring the vessels of wrath with much long-suffering, must be understood either of God's enduring them *before he strikes them*, or his enduring of them, before his changing and returning them. Now if we take it in the former sense, how doth it agree with or answer these two ends: first, of showing his wrath, and making his power known. And secondly, making known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, for these ends are not answered thereby; his wrath is concealed whilst he spares them, and the riches of his glory to the vessels of *mercy*, are not made known: for while the wicked prosper *they* suffer; but in the latter sense both these ends are answered. God shows his wrath on those vessels of wrath, while he endures them as such, and thereby commends his love to the elect, the vessels of mercy, as we may see in Mal. i. 2, where God thus makes out his love to Israel: "I have loved you," saith the Lord, "yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." O poor weak man, that needs such a light as this to see the love of God! *contraria juxta se posita magis illucescunt.* Therefore the wrath on the vessels of wrath, seems to be ordained for this, as one main end to set off the riches of glory towards the vessels of mercy; and when that and other holy ends of it are attained, then will the Lord be at liberty to come forth in the manifestation of that grace, and those riches of glory which are most natural to him. Then his enduring, his suffering, his long-suffering of so dark a scene will have an end. Besides that this sense suits and agrees best with what is said of those vessels of wrath, that they are fitted to destruction; the Greek word signifies, made up, which relates to the action of the potter upon his lump, spoken of before, and therefore it is most agreeable to him to have such an end upon such vessels which himself hath made up in judgment, (this is wrath) that it should end in the changing and restoring of them, which must be indeed by destroying and breaking them in their first form, wherein they are made up for wrath, as the apostle saith in the case of the incestuous Corinthian, "Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." And lastly, if we may be allowed so to understand it, that there is herein a close intimation of God's taking up at last, and changing and restoring these vessels of wrath in those terms of his enduring them with much long-suffering, as if burthened while they so remain. Then we have a fuller and more satisfactory answer to that objection, which the apostle raises, and undertakes to answer, ver. 14. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God! (as Arminians say,) and thereby seek to overthrow Predestination; which is much allayed, if to the sovereignty of God, and his will, we add this, that it is not simply the exercise of his sovereignty, *but his glorious ends*, and those attained, this scene shall have an end, and while it lasts, *God himself suffers* and endures as well as they.

This I say brings him off fully in his act of predestination or *direliction;* but as to the execution of this decree, it is not without the intervention of the creature's just demerit, viz. their unbelief; wherein is not a simple impotency, that they cannot believe, except it be given them to believe; for God tells them so, and deals most sincerely with them, and there is not a man at the last day, in the face of that great assembly, shall be able to say to God, "I came to thee in the sense of my want of faith, or the spirit, or any grace, and my inability to believe, or to give myself that grace, and thou denyedst me." But there is a malignity in the will against believing in this way of God to save men by grace, as well as against the changing of their hearts and natures by the spirit. "For men love darkness more than light," they love their lusts more than the image of God, and they love and think highly of their own deeds, which Christ by his light shows to be evil; and that makes them to be ill affected to the Gospel, because it edifies them not in their over-weening opinion of their own righteousness, not knowing or believing those better works which God offers them in exchange: they are called *the works wrought in God*, which he that doth truly, and comes to the light, sees to be his works, and sees his work to be, viz. the work of God in Christ, made his by imputation: Christ's works, set to his account; which is his righteousness, and the spirit and life of Christ working all his works in him, and for him, in God, or in a divine principle; which is his holiness or sanctification. Both these are an abomination to a man in the flesh; and the higher parted and the more moralized he is (remaining a stranger to this light) the more fierce he is, and the bitterer enemy to it; as may be read in the Scribes and Pharisees, and the devout men and women of that day; and it is so still to this day, therefore now, there being a malignity in the will against believing, this

makes their suffering and damnation just, were there nothing else: but alas, at the back of this unbelief (as this that engages the soul therein) stand all those lusts, both the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life: Yet how long and grievous soever the punishment of this disobedience, it shall keep within the bounds of *the due proportion*, and not exceed the demerit beyond justice, for God will judge all men according to their works, and some shall find it easier than others; they that have sinned without law, they that have not had the means that others have, shall not have so hot a hell.

But to return to my argument, which to be sure will determine the sense of this, and all other like Scriptures, that they cannot conclude or shut up the Lord for ever from visiting those with forgiveness for whom Christ died. For if this be the Gospel, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, that he gave himself a ransom; and this Gospel is commanded to be carried out into the world, and preached to every creature, and they are required to believe it on pain of damnation; and if unbelief be the only sin, that makes all other sins damnable, as our Saviour himself implies, in John xvi. 9, where speaking of the Spirit convincing the world of sin, he hides all under unbelief "because they believe not on me;" then sure this is a most certain truth, that Christ is an object of confidence for every creature; and it is a most undoubted truth, that Christ died for every man, and if so, his death shall not be without effect, *first or last*. For we see there is a time for giving forth the joy and comfort of it to the elect themselves, who many of them are not called till late, and remain children of wrath in unbelief a long time; as also all the other fruits and advantages of Christ's death, and of his resurrecton also, have their seasons differing, wherein they are given forth, to some sooner, to others later, as the resurrection of the body itself; which follows due by good right from Christ's resurrection, who arose again the third day. But though seventeen hundred years and more are elapsed from the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the dead are not raised. And when the resurrection shall come there will be an order in it; "they that are Christ's shall be raised at his coming," viz. they that came into Christ in this life-time, by believing, they are those the apostle speaks of, when he saith, "They that are Christ's at his coming;" but the rest lie in their graves till the end, as the apostle saith, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom," &c. And that is the time of raising of the rest of the dead, who are not to see nor to have their part in the blessedness of that time of Christ's kingdom upon the earth, yet I say raised must they be, and made alive they must be in Christ the second Adam, as they died in Adam; which by all fair construction must be taken of another life than merely the bodily life, because it answers to the life lost in the first Adam; but of that more in its proper place.

Wherefore, if men assign a less purchase to Christ's death, when he died for all, as the Scripture expressly affirms, than the *justification of life*, as the apostle calls it, Rom. v. 18. they wrong and injure the blood of Christ, and set too low a value upon it. It is not the bringing men upon a new probation and trial, or making them simply saveable through the better use of their free will, than Adam made of it, and the purchasing of means, and space, and opportunity, as some would have it, that can be deemed in any righteous judgment a valuable consideration for Christ's blood; these might have been obtained at a cheaper rate; it is no less than the actual saving of those persons, every one of them, for whom Christ died, that can compensate so great a price as the blood of Christ.

Q. You will say, why then are men damned?

A. I answer, for not believing and obeying the Gospel: yet as their unbelief cannot, must not make the faith of God of no effect; so their punishment, be it how long soever, how grievous soever, cannot extinguish "the right and claim of Christ's blood for their deliverance," be it after ages and generations ever so many, Christ's blood loseth not its virtue, its value, nor can be satisfied, but cries till all for whom it was shed be delivered: and it was shed for the worst, the veriest backslider, one of the worst sort of sinners, else how can they be charged with counting the blood of the covenant, whereby they were sanctified, an unholy thing, as they are, Heb. x. 29.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Recapitulation, or Reunion of all Things under Christ their Head.

We come now to another class of Scriptures, the first whereof is, Eph. i. 10: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." This is the mystery of his will made known "to us by the Gospel, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." To this join Col. i. 20: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, I say, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven;" what those things are, we may see more hereafter.

The words ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι rendered here to gather together in one, in the original signifies to rally or rehead routed or *scattered* forces or members, into their place, in the body, under their own head, into the place or rank where they were before: and the word ἀποκαταλλάξαι which is here rendered to reconcile, signifies to change a thing from enmity or antipathy to harmony, to make it *another thing* from what it was. It hath the same force with the other word, though from another metaphor; they both import, that all men, all things originally were made by Christ, stood in him, were *headed under him*, did bear a proportion to him, comported duti-

fully with their relation to him, had no darkness or enmity, no antipathy; there was no war, no fighting, no disorder; all which came in by sin; therefore he saith, Christ *made peace* by the blood of the cross. By the fall all things are fallen asunder, and disjointed, and in a war, not knowing their place and subordination, they justle one another, having *cast off their head* and dissolved the sacred bond that held them all together; they move in no order, no harmony, but confusedly like atoms in the sun: heaven and earth are mingled together as in the first *chaos*. This face of confusion dwells upon all things even the *elect* as well as the *reprobate*, the things in *heaven* as well as the things on *earth*, they are children of wrath by nature as well as others; they are without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; and thus they continue till Christ appears, whom God sends forth to recover this shattered and disjointed creation to himself, and to make it whole again, one new piece in him; for he is their *proper place* and habitation; which the angels that fell forsook first, and ravished man with them, and man carried all things else with him; and He addressing himself to this work like a wise workman falls upon the *root of the mischief* and disorder to remove that, which their was no other way to do, but by his own death; taking *all upon himself*. For they were all his, his body, his fulness, his members, the shadowy image of Him who is the substantial image of God; and they could not make satisfaction but it would ruin them for ever, and all the enmity was on their part; it was they were to be reconciled. We no where read of reconciling of God, but God reconciles the world to himself by Christ, and the love of God in Christ bearing their sins and frowardness, and disorders on himself in his own body on the tree, slaying this enmity and recovering them all to God in the person of Christ; makes them all return again to their places, and to stand first in a slain and crucified image in his death. Wherein the love of God beholding them descends upon them with the greatest ardour, and so quickens them and carries them up into one glorious image in the resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus. And this he doth for the *things in earth* as well as in *heaven*; for Christ contains both earth and heaven in him, and his kingdom consists of both a *new heaven* and a *new earth*.

Now the argument drawn from these Scriptures, lies in the generality and universality of the subject matter, upon which God thus designs, which is not only exprest generally *by all things*, but distributively, all things which are in earth, and which are in heaven. Now as the apostle argues in another case, without racking 1 Cor. xv. when he saith, "all things are put under him," he will not allow it to be a figurative speech, or a large speaking only, (but saith he) it is manifest that *nothing is excepted* that is not put under him. So if all things be reconciled, there is nothing but is reconciled, and if reconciled and that by his death, we know what follows, Rom. v. 10: "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life: and sure there is power in his life and reign to do it;" and being brought back to him, as their head, and standing in him again as his members, sure none shall tear them from him. If they were but in his hands, as his sheep, he saith, none shall take them out of his hands, John x. 28, and if that be not enough, he adds, his Father is greater than all, and none shall pluck them out of his Father's hands. Will ye yield to this? Though as he immediately subjoins, He and his Father are one; his Father designed this recovery, and he the Son executed it.

This will be clearer, if we take in the other two Scriptures, Eph. iii. 9, "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ," and Tit. ii. 11: "The grace of God bringing salvation to all men hath appeared." Here in both places, the term is universal, *all men*; all men must see what is the fellowship of the mystery. What mystery? The mystery of the Gospel, which is the *saving mystery*, or the mystery of salvation, which hath been hid and cherished in the heart of God always from eternity, during this dark scene of things, from the beginning of the world, not only from the fall, but before. The first creation was but a shadowy image of it. In a shadow there is darkness as well as light; but since the *fall*, it was all dark. Not but that God did beam forth so much of this mystery, all along into the hearts of the elect, as sufficed to his end, and their salvation; yet in comparison, it was not revealed till Christ came, which is called the dispensation, Eph. i. 10: "The dispensation of the fulness of time," intimating to us, that there were several dispensations of this mystery of God's will, and several other times for those dispensations; but that this gathering up of all things into one in Christ, was reserved for the dispensation of the fulness of times, the times of Christ. All the times before, things lay disjointed as they were by the fall, things were sinking from Adam to Moses, and death reigned *openly*: life was conveyed but *secretly* in the promised seed, and then with Moses came the law, when sin and death grew to their height, as the apostle shows to the Romans; and so the times before Christ were the times of the fulness of sin, (at least) of sins under the first Testament. Now as sin and death grew and reigned by the law, till they came to their fulness, so now grace and righteousness must come to their fulness under Christ, which will not be till Christ's second coming. For so it is said, we shall be saved by his life; when Christ who is our life shall appear, then we read of the fulness of the Jews. If the diminishing of them be the riches of the world, and the casting off them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? And in the same chapter, we read of the fulness of the Gentiles also under the law; God took only the Jews, the seed of Abraham, for his people, and if

any Gentiles, they were to be proselyted and ingrafted into that stock; and he took not all of them neither under the times of the Gospel. Hitherto he hath taken his Church indeed out of all nations, but a sprinkling only of the nations, and left out the body of the Jewish nation: but under the times of Christ's second appearance and reign, the fulness both of Jews and Gentiles are to be united, and in that all dispensations shall end, and with them all the times of this world, and time itself is said to go out, Rev. x. 6: "Time shall be no longer," which is another proof of this point; that all those gradual and contracted dispensations that shared the former times between sin and righteousness, life and death, are bounded by time, according to that Ec. iii. 1: "To every thing there is a season and a time, to every purpose under the heaven," as he there instances at large for eight verses together. But with time these vicissitudes and interchangable courses of good and evil go out, and under the days of Christ's glorious and visible reign (or at least at or before the end thereof) enters the time of everlasting love, healing, and peace, which shall give place to the contrary no more; but as it was in the beginning so (with the addition of all spoils gained from the kingdom of darkness) shall it be for ever. Then shall this mystery of life and salvation, which was hid in God, be manifested *upon all men*, to make all men know the fellowship of it. For this was in the heart and counsel of God always from the beginning, though hid there, and not revealed till these last times; and there is a strong reason for it in the text, which extends it to every individual man, couched in these words, "Who created all things by Jesus Christ;" as who should say, Christ is the rock out of which all things, all men were hewed, and they were created of God by Jesus Christ, therefore shall be returned to him through the same Jesus Christ; they must all be reconciled and headed again under him. This is but just, that Christ should be redintegrated and made whole of all his members, if you can say any man was not created by Jesus Christ, him you may except; but the Scripture gives no allowance to such an exception, for it saith God created all things by Jesus Christ.

This gradual revelation of grace sparing at first, and more and more plentiful as the time grew on, is prefigured to us by the waters issuing from the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvii. which at first, for a thousand cubits are very shallow, but the increase for the next thousand is to the knees, the third thousand to the loins, the fourth thousand a river to swim in, and otherwise unpassible: which four thousand cubits, if they be understood of years, bring us to the times of Christ, when as sin had before abounded, so now was the time come for grace to superabound, and those waters go down into the desert, and into the sea, and being brought forth into the sea, it is said the waters shall be healed, ver. 8, and every thing wheresoever the river shall come, *shall live*, and Joel iii. 18, it is said of these waters, "a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittem, or the valley of Seddim, which is the valley of Sodom, near Jordan," as Mr. Ainsworth interprets it in his Annotations on Gen. xiv. 3, which agrees with the prophet Exekiel, chap. xvi. of giving Sodom and Samaria for daughters to Jerusalem, but not by *their* covenant. Now if Sodom shall be healed, you know that those are the cities set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Obj. If you say, but we see not yet all men brought to the knowledge of the mystery.

Answ. I answer as our Saviour in another case, "the end is not yet." There were two thousand years before the law; there were two thousand years under the law. Christ's times are the fulness of times, but the fulness of these times of Christ are not "till the second appearance" in his glorious and visible kingdom, then he will take to himself his great power and reign. Christ hath not yet delivered up the kingdom to the Father. But,

2dly. I shall answer this exception in the words of the author to the Hebrews in a like case, chap. ii. 8, 9: "But now we see not yet all things put under him; but," saith the apostle, "we see Jesus who for a little time (for so the words should be read) was made lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." There are two things in this answer, and both of them of great satisfaction.

First. That though we see not the whole race of men thus magnified (as the Spirit by the mouth of David, Ps. viii., imports, there speaking of things future, as done) yet, saith the apostle) we see Jesus thus magnified and exalted after his humiliation and abasement; and if you say what is that to us? ver. 10, shows you he is the captain and representative of the whole, and what is done to him, is done to them, and shall be done to them; for "both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified are both of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

2dly. The foundation of this exaltation of every man is laid in Christ's suffering death for every man; which by the grace and favour of God he did; he tasted death for every man, therefore if that can work out any glory for men, we are sure of that; every man hath a share and interest in his sufferings, in his death; and this is assured so perfectly, that the apostle doth not use a general word, that he tasted death for the world, nor the plural number, for all men, which might have been looked upon as intimating a universalness, but not so strict a universality; but ὑπὲρ παντὸς, for every man; as if the apostle had studied to obviate and prevent any such subterfuge or evasion. And it is but according to the first design which objected itself upon man, as man, and therefore every one that hath the nature of man is under that gracious counsel and design; which sin breaking in to cross, Christ hath again taken out of the way by his death, he tasting death for every man, not a man, but

his death had an eye unto: and every man, as a man, hath a part in it by the designation even of the Father also, or the grace of God, and indeed the death of Christ being by God's ordination, the sole sufficient means of the reconciliation of men to God, if God bear a good will to all men (as if it be good-will to men, as men, it must be to all) then this means must be intended for all; and if intended for all, it must be some time or other applied to all. For the intention of God as well as his word, must not be vain, nor return unto him empty, without effecting the thing intended. Therefore as it is the sole-sufficient, so it must be an all-sufficient means, and effectual to the bringing in of all men to God first or last; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of this saving mystery. And for this, among other reasons, might the resurrection of our Saviour, which was his rest and discharge from the painful work of our redemption, be cast, to be upon the first day of the week, as to take in all the works of God before him. How shall this make us admire the Lord! This is the use the apostle makes of it, Rom. xi. 33. After that discourse of the council of God in the rejection of the Jews, and after a prospect taken of the gracious and glorious issuing thereof, in having mercy upon all, he breaks out, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out:" and concludes, "that of him, and through him, and to him are all things." And mark what he instances, not in his mercies, they are plain, but in his *judgments;* "how unsearchable are his judgments," viz. who would look to find mercy in judgment? yet so it is, the richest mercy lies at the bottom of the severest judgments; this makes *mercy* such a mystery.

How should this bring us in love with God, who is love, who is such a good throughout! What a ground of confidence is this to the elect, to believers, if God loves all his creatures, all men; sure then those that he hath chosen to be the first fruits of his creatures, are upon a great and happy advantage and security. This seems to be in David, when he so often reflects upon the goodness of God to all, Ps. cxlv. 9: "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works:" and again, Ps. xxxvi. 5, 6: "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth to the clouds," viz. it fills the whole space between heaven and earth. "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep, thou preservest man and beast." And doth God take care of oxen? saith the apostle, ye are of much more value than many sparrows, saith our Lord. He that preserveth *beasts*, as who should say, will not lose *man*, will not lose so many souls; every one of which is more worth than the whole world of inferior creatures. What a strengthening might it be *to the faith of Abraham.* Is the covenant grounded on Christ, that righteous one, and his perfect obedience? When if there had been but *ten righteous persons in Sodom*, God would have spared Sodom. What a hope may this yield us for all men; when God hath not the righteousness of ten righteous persons to sustain him in his showing mercy to them, but hath the perfect obedience and great sacrifice of his own Son. That spotless Lamb, his own righteousness, which is more than ten thousand of us offered up for them; which may bring him off with indemnity to his justice as engaged by the law, though otherwise man is the subject alone that needs to be reconciled.

CHAPTER XI.

The Objection grounded on Election and Reprobation Considered.

This doctrine may be judged to destroy election and reprobation, but unjustly. If it justle with any clear truth of the Gospel, the controversy is decided, this doctrine cannot be truth. Election and reprobation is as clear a truth of the Gospel, as redemption by Christ is; not an election of *qualities* and *principles* (as some) but of *persons;* not *conditional* but *absolute* and *free;* not *subsequent*, of works or inclinations, but *antecedent* and *eternal* before any good or evil done by them; this is my faith wherein I stand, and this decree of election is *definite*, *certain*, and *irrevocable;* so that they are known by name and have great and certain *privileges* and immunities; as not only certain and everlasting *salvation*, presently *begun* at their calling and *perfected at death*, and at the resurrection of the dead; but also certain preservation from all damnable *errors* of seducing spirits, and the contagious or deadly *touch*, or contagion of the *evil one*, and the sin *unto death.*

Yet all this doth no more deny the salvation of the rest of men, in their order or due times, than the resurrection of Christ, the first-fruits, doth hinder the resurrection of all that sleep in him; whereof it is indeed the *earnest* and pledge. For as Christ is in his resurrection become the first-fruits of them that sleep, and assurance that they shall rise also: so are the elect in their sanctification and salvation, *the first-fruits of his creatures*, and the pledge and assurance of their sanctification and salvation; and that as the first-fruits of the Jewish Church, the seed of Abraham doth not deny the *lump* also of that nation to be visited with saving and effectual grace in due time, but as a pledge and assurance of it; as the apostle argueth, Rom. xi. 16, "for if the first-fruits be holy the lump also is holy," and if the root be holy so are the branches. Now as Christ is called the first-fruits of the elect, and the primitive church of the Jews were the first-fruits of that nation: so the *election* among Jews and Gentiles are called "a kind of first-fruits of his creatures," James i. 18; so also Jer. ii. 3; Rev. xiv. 4.

Now the ordinance of the first-fruits as you may see in the law, was this: they were to bring of the seven fruits of Canaan, mentioned Deut. viii. 8, (in which number is a mystery also;) and the design of it was to acknowledge the Lord's right to the whole

land and all the fruits thereof, as by the form they used at the solemnity may be seen, Deut. xvi. 16, 17, which is the meaning of what the apostle saith, if the first-fruits be holy, viz. if it be the Lord's, and given to the Lord, the lump is also holy: the lump is the Lord's, and shall be given to him, or taken by him in due time, when he takes to himself his great power and reigns.

Now apply this first-fruits to men; for what are the fruits of the earth to God? "will he eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats?" doth he feed on wheat, or barley, or pomegranates, figs, or dates, which were the first-fruits under the law? "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Israel was the first-fruits of the nation till Christ came. The election is now the first-fruits of his creatures; who are all to be gathered in at Christ's second appearance, before he delivers up the kingdom to the Father.

What is there in election against this? but rather an argument for it, and a confirmation of it; especially if we consider the form used at the first-fruits, where the Israelites confessed themselves to be as abject an interest as any of the nations, till God looked upon them. "An Assyrian ready to perish was my father," referring to Jacob, serving Laban, and keeping his sheep for twenty years; and then oppressed and made bondsmen in Egypt; of the same lump with the meanest of the nations, till God exalted them to that privilege by grace, even as the elect are by nature children of wrath, even as others; therefore by grace may others be raised as well as they. For as all the fruits of Canaan were the Lord's, as well as the first-fruits: so doth he not say, "all souls are mine," the soul of the son, as well as the father; the *souls* that sin and die, as well as the souls that are righteous and live?

But let us consider these decrees under those other notions we meet with in Scripture of *vessels*, vessels of honour and dishonour, vessels of wrath, and vessels of mercy. The apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 20, speaking of some opinions and doctrines which he calls profane and vain babblings, that were very dangerous and contagious, eating as doth a canker, and overthrowing the faith of some, making the state of them that held and broached them dangerous enough; having shewed us the dark side of this cloud, yet to quiet us in the work of God in it gives us this placid account of it, which we may call the light side of the cloud, (for so is every dispensation of God, a dark and a light and hopeful side, that the saint may in nothing sorrow as those without hope) the account he delivers thus: "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour." Mark you how the vessels to dishonour are *vessels*, as well as the vessels to honour. For all vessels are *useful*, and for use; no man makes a vessel merely for destruction, but *for use*: though a dishonourable use, yet it is a necessary use; and there is some honour in that, with the dishonour: yea, it is of use to the house, it is a vessel of the house, the great house. This great house is the great world, which is the house of God, as even the bodies as well as souls of men are said to be the Lord's, and to be made by him, and their members to be his; members of Christ, though they make them members of an harlot, both mystically and literally; and they are said to have their bodies of him, and to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, and not to be their own. And the reason following carries it for the bodies of all men, "for ye are bought with a price;" all these are to be found in 1 Cor. vi. from ver. 16, to the end.

But this will appear more fully, if we consider what is the use of those vessels to dishonour. We have it in part before, the vessels of wrath *are to commend the grace of God* to the vessels of mercy: as misery sets off mercy, so wrath commends grace; grace would have been grace if wrath had never been, but grace would not have so appeared grace; as the apostle saith, sin would not have been so exceeding sinful, if it had not been for the law. Light would have been light had there been no night, no darkness; but light would not have so appeared light, nor have been so commended to us, who need the help of one contrary to illustrate another; and so I may say is sin and righteousness, Christ and Belial. Therefore God that made the day to consist of *evening and morning*, a light part and a dark; he also ordained the law as a foil to grace, wrath as a set-off to love.

Now then, if this be the end of wrath, when this end is attained and perfected, (as God's end must be sooner or later) else he should never rest, which is not to be imagined of omnipotency, then must wrath end, in its end thus obtained.

But the further use of these vessels to dishonour, 1 Cor. xi. 19, "For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you." The light manifests errors, and heresies manifest the truth, as contraries illustrate one another. God hath built this world for these contrarieties to display themselves: "For this cause," saith God to Pharaoh, "have I raised thee up, (to this eminency of subtlety and power) that I might show my power." Thus the Lord hath appointed all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil. "The wicked and his day too are both for the Lord himself." The wicked for the day, and the day for the Lord; and when the wicked and his day have both served their end, then there is another day wherein God will appear as he is; and he is *love*. This is the message that we have heard of him, that *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* Then,

3. Consider whose work it is, this difference of vessels and work; it is the Lord's; he owns it; "he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." The hardening proceedeth from the same will as the mercy. Now the will or pleasure of God is the source or fountain of the highest pleasure. Man's will is called his pleasure, but man may have pleasure in unrighteousness, and in the misery and slave-

ry of others, as tyrants have; but God, who is not divided from his creatures and works, though he have the liberty to design and practice upon them for the illustration of his glory; yet he seeks not, serves not himself *ultimately*, but in and by the profit, the advantage of the creature. It is said in Jude iv, "There are certain men crept in unawares," that is, unawares to the Church, but not to God; for they were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord is προγεγραμμένοι, and it signifies *conscripti*, fore-written, or listed, as soldiers in a company. Answerable hereunto we meet with a word before, κατηρτισμένοι εἰς ἀπώλειαν, made up, or fitted to destruction. It is a dreadful destiny, but let us consider whose will and ordination this is, who it is that pricks down every name in this *black roll*. It is infinite goodness, infinite sweetness doth it, and this brings in some light into this dark shade. If you look on the ways of God towards his dearest children, and wait not for the end, you may see such dark shades, as in the case of Job; which therefore the apostle holds forth to us in the light of *the end*. You have heard of the patience of Job, and the end of the Lord. *Finis coronat opus*. If you say God doth not declare or reveal this end, I grant it is but sparingly hinted, because this scene of wrath, and of the conflict of contraries is not yet over, and we are blinded with the dust of it; but we see this end, though darkly in the nature of God, who is love; we see it in the mediation of Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all, who is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; yea, for these very men ordained to this condemnation, and that do certainly bring upon themselves swift destruction, 2 Pet. ii. 1, he bought even them that deny him, and bring in those damnable heresies.

Obj. But you will say, doth not this make God the author of sin, that he ordains men to condemnation and punishment?

Answer. God is not tempted of evil, neither doth he tempt any man; he puts no evil into man, doth not positively influence him to evil; he needs not do that, design he never so much on the evil of the creature to draw forth good out of it; for the creature is a creature, is mutable, corruptible, hath a defectibility without confirming grace; but God *withholds*, according to the counsel of his will, that grace from the reprobate; and this is that which he may lawfully do for the illustration of his own holiness, purity, immutability; that the creature showing himself to be a creature, a mere dependency, God may appear to be God. "Thus he made all things for himself," saith Solomon; but where doth he find himself in the winding up, but in casting out this enemy that is gotten into man, and in restoring him to his own image, and embrace as at first. But to clear up this, I will show in two instances, the prerogative that God exerciseth justly and righteously in withholding grace from men.

1. In withholding the means.

2. In withholding the blessing upon the means.

1. The means: not that God hath left any of his creatures wholly without means, for whosoever he brings forth into the light of this world, he furnishes them with the means of knowing him, as the apostle said, Rom. ii. 20, &c. and in Acts xiv. 17. Such and so sufficient means as shall leave them *inexcusable*, and stop their mouths at that great tribunal. But *comparatively* with the means he affords to others, he denies the means to the greatest part of the world. He hath not dealt so with every nation, saith the Psalmist, when he contemplates and surveys the goodness of the Lord to Israel, to whom he gave his statutes and his judgments. So saith our Saviour to the Jews of Corazin and Bethsaida, "If the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Matth. xi. 21. And so he saith to Capernaum, "If the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sidon, it would have remained to this day."

2. But now the Jews had all these means and mighty works, yet repented not: here therefore the Lord denies not the means, but Deut. xxix. 4, *withholds of blessing*, yea more than this, he owns to blind their eyes and harden their hearts, and gives the means a commission to a quite contrary effect than their conversion, even to make their hearts fat, and their ears heavy, lest they should see and be converted, and he should heal them. John xii. 40; Rom. xi. 8. God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, to this day; mark that, (unto this day) that qualifies it: that day lasts still on the generality of the people; but it is not said it shall last for ever, and that they shall never see nor hear; nay, there are plentiful promises to the contrary, and in ver. 11, the apostle takes them up again, and shows the candid design God hath in this; "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid! but rather, through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles." This is the light side of the design, which makes amends for the other at present; but the other and further purposes he breaks open afterwards, from ver. 52, to the end of the chapter which I have pointed at before.

Obj. But you may say, if God hath such a counsel, and it is his pleasure thus to illustrate his glory; the glory of all his attributes in such a way, to withhold his grace from the greatest part of his creatures: yet how can we reconcile such severe punishing of them, (not only with temporal, but especially with eternal damnation) I say, how can this be reconciled to such an universal sweetness and goodness as you hold forth in God?

Answer. One would think this was the objection that crost the way to this apostle in his discourse of this very point, Rom. ix. 19, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?" and then I pray take his answer, "Nay, but

O man! who art thou that repliest against God: shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay," &c. But my answer is, that in some respect this is that objection, but in another respect it is not; for the objection as it is here urged, lies against the goodness of God, but as it is taken up by the apostle, it lies only *against his justice;* and so in Rom. iii. 5. Is God unrighteous that taketh vengeance? Where the apostle makes his apology for naming it. "I speak as a man," saith he, as who would say, I have learned otherwise as a Christian, than to mention such a thing in a way of questioning, as whether God be righteous or no: nay, it puts him into an ecstasy, as the next words shew; "God forbid, for how then shall God judge the world?" And this may be the reason why he is so short in the answer of it, in both places, because it was a question not fit to be made, or an objection not fit to be brought in a captious way by men; and therefore he minds them of themselves and their mean extraction, they are but as clay before the potter; as things formed: for whom to arraign the *Former*, the Former of all things, is not only very uncomely, but most absurd. Thus it is not the same objection, yet as the righteousness of God is concerned to make all his ways agree and comport with his *goodness*, so it is in that respect also an objection that touches the righteousness of God: for he must be just to himself as well as to his creatures; he must not eternally, no not for a moment, appear in any act or dispensation that consists not, yea, that is not in most full and perfect harmony with his infinite and eternal sweetness, love, grace, and goodness in a right and true discerning of it in a true light.

And therefore though the apostle be so short and round with these objections in both these places; it is not, I conceive, that he had not more to say upon them, but to that proud and petulant spirit, that would arraign the justice and righteousness of God, he thinks them worthy of no further answers; but to shake them off as he did the viper into the fire.

But as the day comes on for the manifestation of things, the divine light may enable to give further answer, as the season and occasion may require. It is said, "know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" And if God will judge the secrets of all hearts, according to the gospel, if we see it, whereby every mouth may be stopped; and we have the hopes left upon record by the same apostle, that howsoever we now see through a glass darkly; *yet we shall see face to face* and know as we are known; and since the time is very near this of judgment, and therefore we may expect that this light of things promised, should be opened upon us; as indeed this light doth open upon us, which turns to us for a testimony that the day draws near; then we may proceed to a more full solution.

1. Therefore, to those that acknowledge the righteousness of God, that he cannot be unrighteous, for he is the former of all things; he may do with his own what he pleases: whatsoever he doth, is and must needs be righteous, because he doth it; for who should give law to him? to those that can say thus, yet are not furnished with an answer to check every rising in their own heart, or the objections they hear from perverse men; nor to stop their mouths, though they allow them not at all, we shall offer a supply of argument, and proceed to examine this plea against *the Judge of all the earth.* He hath justified us; let us see if in his light we are able to do any service for him. I have said before, that God is not the author of any man's sin, by *positive* influence, or instilling evil into him. Nor is he the inflicter of the least punishment, much less of their damnation in hell, *without just cause of their sin:* So that every man's destruction is of himself, and his own concupiscence. God withholds grace, that must be granted, that is, such grace as he grants to some; though he affords means to all, and that sufficient to render them inexcusable, though not effectual to save them presently, or in the present time. For he hath not only given them the book of the creatures, wherein to read his goodness and their own beings, with all the mercies and comforts of them, as the apostle saith, Acts xvii. 28; Rom. i. 20; Acts xiv. 17; Rom. x. 18, 19, taken out of Psalm xix, which gathers and binds up the books of God, both the book of the world, and the book of the word, or the scriptures, into one volume; but which is more, God hath done more for the world, than the greatest part of them know or will know; *He hath given his Son for them, to die for them*, and reconcile them, by bearing their iniquities; and though they have lost or forgotten their benefit, or thrust it away from them, the Lord took care that this gospel should be carried into all the world, *and preached to every creature under heaven;* and the apostle Paul saith it was so, as we have noted before, and therefore God may justly require an account of it, as he will do: this is the first thing to clear the righteousness of God. But,

2. Though God doth withhold that grace from men, whereby they might have been kept from sinning, and from their contempt of his goodness, and thrusting it away from them; yet therein his throne is guiltless, as may convincingly appear if we consider,

1st. That God hath dealt as candidly with men as possibly can be desired, and hath told them over and over in his word, that they are dead in trespasses and sins, and that without him they can do nothing truly or spiritually good; that he loves first, and that from him is all their fruit found; and this is the language, not of scripture only, but of nature; for every man feels himself to be a mere dependency, and to have his being of grace from God, not of himself; and the light of reason, which men can improve in other things, tells them that *unde esse inde operari;* whence men's beings are, thence must their working be; if we live, move, and have our being in God (not only from him, but in him) as to this life of nature; then sure we cannot live nor move in any spiritual life or action, without his immediate quickening presence and influence.

2ndly. The Lord hath left a promise large

enough, to give the Spirit to every one that asks it, Mat. vii. 7; Luke xi. 9. Where the Spirit, and all the good things of the Spirit are promised to every one that asketh in faith, and with the same good earnest as a child asks bread when he is hungry, or as men seek for treasure, as Solomon speaks, Prov. ii. 4. Upon which account I shall be bold to say, there is not a man at the last day shall be able to say to God, "I sought of thee the Spirit in the sense of my indispensable need of it; as being undone without it. I sought it as a hungry man seeks bread, or with the same seriousness, sincerity, or earnestness, as men seek treasure, or the things of this life, and thou deniedst me." For to such a seeking is the promise made, and to such a seeking are men instituted, if they take heed thereto. What man regards an indifferent, cold, careless suitor, that seeks without concern, not mattering what becomes of his suit?

3rdly. Now so far are men from this (all men that are not bowed, persuaded, drawn of God, of his special grace and favour) that they have an enmity, antipathy, contrariety to the gospel, and this way of salvation by grace; yea, it is *foolishness*, it is an *abomination* to them. So is man's nature corrupted and fly-blown with pride and conceit, by Satan, that grand enemy of the grace of God; for what man ever yet hated his own flesh, as the apostle saith in another case, but nourishes and cherishes it (as here in corrupt nature) against the Lord? And if a man close with Christ, he must hate his own life comparatively, that is, he must bring under his body, even the body of all natural and legal righteousness and perfection, counting all things dung in comparison of Christ, and the righteousness of God. I might be copious upon this, but I do but touch it, which is sufficient in the pursuit of my argument.

4thly. These uses of dishonour that the vessels of dishonour are employed in, are of *their own choosing*, so that they have no wrong therein, or if they have, they do themselves the wrong. I speak not here of sin *in general*, which is men's own choice, and all their sensual lusts and appetites, but of those works wherein God employs both the evil spirits and wicked men. In doing of which they sin, as not doing God's will, nor having any regard to his *commission*, and the bounds thereof, but executing their own lust and malice, as may be instanced, first in the devil and his angels. You read of a seducing spirit commissioned against Ahab, to draw him to his own destruction at Ramoth Gilead; the spirit that did it, *offered himself*; and so in the case of Job, the devil *desired the work* to afflict and prove Job. These were both righteous works in God. Ahab had forfeited his life by his wickedness before, and it was an act of justice in God to bring him to punishment; and the making the patience of Job conspicuous, and setting him up as an example, was likewise an honourable counsel and work, as it was the counsel and work of God; but *Satan* in both these was *a vessel to dishonour*, and it was dirty work, as performed by him in his own spirit, and yet it was the work of *his own seeking*, not of God's *imposing*; and so for men that are the instruments of God's vengeance on one another, or of his punishments on his own people, Pharaoh, Senacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar; they were all raised and employed by God to humble Israel, yet they all did *their own work*, and satisfied their own will and lusts therein, and therefore the Lord brings in their charge against them. "I was a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction." Zech. i. 15. And it is a work they needed not to be set upon; they have a propensity to it of their own accord, and cannot be kept back from it without force, as a grey-hound, if a hare be started before him, and the grey-hound be at liberty, he makes at her without setting on. So we might observe of Judas; he was ordained of God to that work, as the work itself was predetermined and foretold, that Christ should be sold, and that by a familiar. Yet Judas did it out of his own wicked and covetous heart, for so saith the scripture, Satan having put into Judas's heart to betray his Master, he went and drove the bargain; and so Gog and Magog, Ezek. xxviii. 10, "Things shall come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought," &c. Yet the work is God's work, to bring the last trial upon the church, after which shall be no more, yet the instruments are evil in it, and set themselves on work, and shall be rewarded accordingly; fire from God, from out of heaven shall feed upon them; and is it not just that it should be so?

5thly. Especially if we consider, that the reward of every man shall be *according to his works*. God will observe a most righteous proportion therein; therefore our Saviour saith it shall be easier in the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon, than for Corazin and Bethsaida, easier for Sodom than for Capernaum, because they had not the means that others had. Upon which account, if a man was sure he was a reprobate and *must* go to hell, it were his concern to keep off from as much sin as he could, for by that means his punishment would be the less. He that knew not his Master's will shall be beaten, but with *few stripes*, in comparison of him that knew and did it not. Thy careless and wretched neglect of means of knowledge tendered, will not excuse (as ignorance) but such shall be reckoned, as knowing what they *might have known*, had it not been for their own neglect.

This is but a little of what God hath to bring of his own justice and righteousness at that great day; yet this is more than I can see how any man can answer. But if I am short in what might be pleaded under this head of the justice and righteousness of God, properly so called, as it relates to sin and sinners, you may perhaps find it made up in this other head of goodness; for he hath a justice to *that*, he must not, he cannot deny himself; he that is true to every thing, must not be unjust to himself, and to his *highest and dearest glory*, which is his *grace*, that word which he hath magnified above all his names; for God is love. Love is himself most adequately and properly, and all his other glories and attributes serve and minister to this; as the gospel abundantly testifies.

Therefore, now, as I said before, he must not, he cannot by any one act of administration, much les by a course, *an endless course of wrath* and judgment, for ever cover this face of his love, so bright and amiable. Therefore having premised this, I come to answer that objection:

Obj. How this way of withdrawing and shutting up himself from his creature man (the greatest part of men) whereby they miscarry (notwithstanding all he hath done for them by Christ, whom he gave to bear their sins, and die for them) and do both sin and fail of this grace of God, and perish and fall into hell, can stand with his being *one eternal act of sweetness and goodness in himself, and unto all.*

Answer. To which I answer, that in seeking this sweetness of God, we must not look for a single sweetness standing alone from all his other glories and attributes, but for a sweetness arising from them all in their *harmonious temperature* and composure; a sweetness that gives free scope and liberty to them all; wherein their distinct sounds are given and heard, as in music; yet all so excellent and skilfully subdued to harmony, that the greatest and most ravishing sweetness, is the result and effect of all those notes both open and stopt, both sharps and flats, both concords and discords, both trebles, bases, and means, or whatever else varieties or contrarieties might be instanced. And without this, and in comparison with this, the sweetest chords or notes *single*, though very sweet in themselves, (as there is a great difference in strings, notes, and stops) yet alone they are dull and flat, and barren of the delight and satisfaction to the hearers.

Now in making out this sweetness, this harmony, we must know that God is the supreme, the greatest, the most absolute, the most perfect unity, comprehending in himself all variety, not only the variety of *diversity*, but of *contrariety*, for so it is said, he calleth things *that are not* (such are sin and unrighteousness, which are *privations*, and have no *positive* being; yet in his counsel about them, and design upon them, he gives them *being*, and calls them) as though they were, and makes them an illustration of *being*, an illustration of things that are, of his own wisdom and righteousness.

2. The sweetness and harmony in this variety of diversity and contrariety, is the descending of this unity and sweetness to the *utmost point*, and diffusing itself through all this variety, this contrariety, imparting to it, in all its passing through it, the sweetness of his own glorious counsel and design; and in the close resting upon it, in a most magnificent, open, and full revelation of itself in the whole, and in every part as it is in the whole. This is the sweetness of the face and heart of God, in all the dark tempestuous scenes of sin and wrath, during the times of this world.

This might be demonstrated both in the *parts* and in the *whole*, there being a particular beauty in every particular act of this tragi-comic scene, as Solomon saith, everything being beautiful in its season; there being nothing *single* or *alone* in the work of God, but bearing an harmonious relation to other parts and to the whole; whence result the beauty of the whole. Sharp trials, and the reward of sweetest joys being in conjunction, and by a mutual, reciprocal projection of their ray, towards and upon each other, setting off and illustrating one another: and so, sweet sin, and bitter punishment: Dives in his life-time receiving his good things, while Lazarus receives evil: and so in the other life Lazarus is comforted, while Dives is tormented. The vessels to dishonour have most generally the praise, honour, and advantage of this world, while the poor in this world are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.

Obj. All this will pass well enough, but still you will say the contrariety remains, and there are happy ones and miserable ones, some seemingly happy and really miserable, others really happy and seemingly miserable; some only happy in this world, but miserable in the next, others miserable in this world, and happy in the next?

Answer. The grace, the sweetness, that rests upon every part in this catholic and universal scene, is that which ariseth from the light of the whole, which to the eye of eternity appears in every step of his way; yea, to him appeared from eternity, before the actual production of any creature, but to us who are creatures, will not visibly appear but in the end, or consummation, when the mystery of God shall be finished, when the body of sin and righteousness shall both have received their complete form and actuation, the fulness of all *their integral parts and members.* Thus shall they rest, as it were, and lie down together in the harmonious bosom of that glorious and matchless counsel and design, that calls up both the things that are not, and the things that are upon the stage of this world, of heaven and earth, to display themselves in their several shapes and colours, for the glory of that great architectonic wisdom and love that designed them all; and designed upon them all the illustrations of that last and sweetest close, that overcoming, that ravishing love and goodness, which is the end of them all.

Now for the further clearing of this, we are presented with three scenes in this great design, which have their distinct and particular seasons allotted them.

The first is the scene of this world, wherein light and darkness, life and death, are brought upon the stage, with these limited and bounded missions, to display themselves in their contraries and antipathies, and this scene takes up all the times of this world.

The second scene is the reconciliation of all these antipathies and contraries, a subduing them to the harmony of the design and council of God, which is the work of Christ and his cross to begin, and his life and kingly power to perfect. And this is begun in the elect in this world; perfected at death, and in the resurrection of the dead; they being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb of the rest of the creation, in whom this work is not begun till the world to come, or Christ's kingdom is gloriously revealed on earth: and then shall it (before Christ hath done, and be-

fore, or at his resignation of the kingdom to the Father) be finished upon the whole nature of mankind, and every individual person.

The third scene is, The glorious fruit and triumph of the whole, thus finished and perfected in the kingdom of the Father; whence both these other scenes shall be swallowed up, and yet shall remain as a landskip of glory to all eternity: where both the elect and reprobate having acted their parts in this design, shall eternally with highest joy and thankfulness, contemplate and review the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, that governed and managed such contrarieties, reconciled such antipathies, and brought forth at last so glorious an issue out of them all, where sinners of all sorts and sizes shall see all their sufferings, temptations, desertions; but shall be afflicted with them no more. They shall look on all indeed as dangers they have passed, as deaths they are delivered out of; yea, so shall the damned rejoice over that hell they have been in. They shall reflect on that fire out of which they are delivered; and it shall be the food of their joy. So that the design of God being now accomplished, and opening itself, shall swallow up all the passions of grief and sorrow that acccompanied these scenes of troubles, while they were in acting; and his righteousness, which is this glorious end, shall swallow up the creature's unrighteousness whereby he has served and wrought unto this end, as he was ordained, but knew it not, which was both his sin and pain; and the creature will see that this glorious Jesus was no thanks to him, but to that glorious counsel and wisdom, that brought good out of evil in this new creation, as he commanded light to shine out of darkness in the first creation. For *ye did it to evil*, saith Joseph to his brethren, *but God turned it to good.*

These are the three scenes: and if we allow the first and not the second, we must keep God and his word at a distance for ever, we must deny Christ to have fulfilled the end he was sent and ordained for, or to do it but in part; yea, we must make God or his work, which is all one, (for God's will and counsel is himself, and his work is the will and counsel executed and brought forth, and all things are this will and counsel) but a part and not the whole, and to whom, or to what shall we cast the other part, unless with the *Manichees*, we make two eternal principles, one of good, the other of evil, which is all one as to make two Gods.

And if we allow this second scene, as if we deny not the scripture we must, for he must reign, and by the power of his life and kingdom finish the work he laid the foundation of in his death and reign, until all his enemies are put under his feet, until death be destroyed, called the last enemy. And is it only temporal death, think you? What glory would be in that, to destroy temporal death, and to leave eternal death rampant over the greatest part of mankind? Therefore death, however, in that place, 1 Cor. xv., relating to bodily death in that argument, yet it implies the other with a *multo magis*, much more: then I say, this being allowed, the third scene will necessarily follow. For when the law hath lost its strength, and death its sting, and sin its force, what should hinder, that the whole choir of every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them should join hallelujahs, and celebrate that grace, that wisdom, that delivered and rescued them out of the jaws of death, the second death. Then every sin that sinners have committed, and every aggravation of their sins, the root of sin being now slain by this gracious, this glorious counsel of God, (in the winding up of all, shining forth upon them) shall be the oil and fuel of their joy and triumph, making the flame thereof ascend the higher and stronger: yea the remembrance of the bitter twinges, and pangs, and torments they have suffered for them, shall increase their pleasure, and give them the fuller, the sweeter relishes of their present endless ease and deliverance.

Thus we see how all these conflicting scenes of light and darkness, good and evil, are bounded *within the times of this world*; and that the reconciliation of them, the subduing the enmity, and vanquishing the darkness totally is the work of *the next world*, and must receive its accomplishment then; before that world ends, before that kingdom be delivered up to the Father. And we see also that the world to come hath an end, and what that end is, even the glorious kingdom of the Father, the kingdom of eternity, and that nothing must last or endure beyond the times of these two worlds, (which are bounded with time) but that which was before them, in which sin nor hell neither of them were: but together with which these worlds, which are but as a double *parenthesis* in eternity, or between both, (that *a parte ante* and that *a parte post*) must receive their determination at last; and so *spotless* eternity, that light in which is no darkness at all, must recover its lost beauty and glory, and shine forth again universally with open face, with the spoils and trophies of *conquered time*, and all its births for ever.

Let no man say, how can these things be: For all things have an end, and pass away, and fail but *love*; even the fainter and weaker diversities of *light and grace*; as we may see in Paradise, and the old world, and the law, and the temple, and that first covenant, yea, the day of Christ's first appearance, the seven Churches of Asia, with the glory of the primitive times. Much more hath the Lord set an end to *darkness*, to the times of sin, and the man of sin, and the reign of death, and the kingdom of wrath; which being now old and ready to vanish, and the power arising whereby it shall be done away; which is the breaking forth of the light of this bright and glorious counsel and design; which being backed and assisted with the life and glorious appearance and reign of the Prince of Life, who is ordained for this end, to vanquish and abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light, and doth it by the gospel; shall make it impossible for death and hell to hold, or keep back these prisoners any longer; even as the light arising upon the heaven, sets free the prisoners of night. Our Saviour when he was lock'd up in the grave for sin,

made it too hard a work for the pains of death to detain him, after the third day, the day of his glorious light was risen upon him; which was as great a work as to release the damned out of hell: for he had the sins of the whole world upon him. Yea, I will say that if this light did once shine out upon the damned, and that after that, they should continue in a local hell, yet hell would be no more hell unto them; nay it would turn hell itself into a heaven, and make very darkness itself to be all light about them, as David speaks of the light of God's gracious presence, Psalm cxxxix, from verse 8 to 13.

CHAPTER XII.

The Objection drawn from the Unpardonableness of the Sin against the Holy Ghost.

I SHALL set down the argument in the words of our Saviour himself, Mark iii. 28: "Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."

This (*never*) is expressed distributively, Matth. xii. 31. "Neither in this world, nor in the world to come." So also Luke xii. 10, you have the same words recorded, as to the substance, besides many other scriptures which hold forth the deplorableness and the irrecoverableness of falling away after being once enlightened, and tasting the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, as Heb. vi. that "it is impossible to renew such to repentance;" with the demonstration and illustration of it, for that they "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame;" and therefore as the ground that after all culture brings forth briars and thorns is nigh to cursing; so their end is to be burned. So also the apostle speaks of wilful sinning after men had received the knowledge of the truth, that "there remains no more a sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary." Heb. x. Which he illustrates by a comparison with such as despised Moses's law, and the remediless of their condition who died without mercy; "of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, that hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?" Where it is put to men themselves to judge of the equity of this proceeding. There are many other places, as in Peter and Jude, that speak of trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots, and of such whose latter end is worse than their beginning; and John, that sweet apostle, that is so full of love, he tells us of a sin unto death, of which he saith, I say *not that ye shall pray for it.*

Now the argument is plain, if any be excepted, be it but one man, one sinner in the world, all that we have said falls to the ground, that's clear.

Before I come to answer this objection, I must enter this caution, that what I have said, and shall now say, is not to plead the cause of such wilful, desperate, and despiteful sinners. God forbid any man should take that task on him, where the Spirit of God doth not command us to pray, that we should be bold to plead; they are not qualified for any such favour, nor are they capable of being qualified or softened by it; if the blood of Christ will not mollify them, nothing will; it were lost, lost labour upon them, as to make a black-a-more white: and it is against the course of God's justice, for men to endeavour it.

But yet this lays no restraint upon us, but that for God and for the truth's sake, the truth may and ought to be spoken: what therefore I here shall say, is for the making good the argument I have in hand, and for the glory of God and his rich grace which is concerned therein.

I answer therefore not by denying any thing of the antecedent, but the sequel, and so I deny the argument; the antecedent is most true, some sinners have never forgiveness, but the illation is false, that therefore they shall never be saved. And so the objection lies equally against all that go to hell, they are not forgiven; yet after all they may be saved, though I grant there is a great difference between the sin against the Holy Ghost and all other sins; for there is not any besides, but men that have committed it may be brought to repent of it, and so may be saved; but this sin precludes repentance; and therefore as there is also a great difference in the degrees of punishment even in hell, so these shall have the lowest and hottest place in that lake of fire: yet this militates not at all against our hypothesis, that they as well as others, I say not as soon as others, but as certainly may some time or other be saved, and plucked out of that burning.

For let us consider our Saviour's words: "They shall not be forgiven:" *they are not forgiven that are cast into hell for their sins.*

Obj. But their damnation is said to be eternal, and it is said, they neither shall be forgiven in this world nor in that which is to come.

Answer. But both this world and the world to come have an end. The end of this world is at hand; how long the next shall last is uncertain; but it is probable it shall last longer than any man living upon earth; which you know in the old world was almost to a thousand years; nay, longer than any of the monarchies ever lasted: if it be meant that during all that space they shall lie under this fiery indignation, it is a great while. The meaning I conceive must either be that; or else to sho what though in the world to come, in Christ's glorious and visible reign on earth, when he shall be a priest upon his throne, there shall be the exercise and demonstration of greater grace than ever was in this world, (as many Scriptures show there shall, for "he will cleanse their blood that he had not cleansed; and a fountain shall go forth from the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim") yet the

grace how immense soever (as the waters of the sanctuary when they were grown to a river impassable) all that water will not wash away the guilt of this sin; I say, either of these senses gives no hopes of forgiveness to this sin, which bars all possibility of repentance in him that commits it. You will say then, how shall they be pardoned? I say, they are not pardoned, but must bear their sin during this world and the world to come. But unless any Scripture holds forth that they or any other sinners, (and if not they, sure not any others) shall bear their sin beyond the term or period of the world to come, then their punishment must end, where the world to come ends, viz. when Christ gives up the kingdom to the Father; for the world to come is the glorious state of Christ's Mediatory kingdom, Heb. ii. 5. And if the continuance of it be so long and until then, I see not but this may give us the account and the meaning of that never-forgiveness, and that eternal damnation which is denounced against this sin; the word eternal being the same (as all grammarians know) that is used for this world or age, and especially if we take in another notation, viz. that this fire is kindled by the breath of the Eternal God who liveth for ever, as the prophet saith of *Tophet*.

Obj. But you may yet say, if they have never forgiveness, nor are ever pardoned, how shall they ever be saved, especially when they lie out of the reach of repentance?

Answer. You must answer with our Saviour, when he had said, "it was as easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle," (which some say was a gate in *Jerusalem* called the *Needle's-eye*, being of a narrow oblong figure) yet saith he, *what is impossible with man is possible with God*; especially if we take in that consideration that he hath the times and seasons in his own power, and hath appointed and set them. And therefore,

2dly, When the set time is come for the determining of wrath and punishment, it then ceases of course. But yet,

3dly, There must be a legal publishing and proclaiming thereof as by the trumpets in the year of jubilee, which is the reason of that language used by the spirit in many places of the prophets, and in the New Testament, as 1 Cor. xv. "for the trumpet shall sound," which is the publishing of this gracious, this glorious counsel of God. The year of *jubilee* began the first day of the seventh month, which was the beginning of their year; and therefore from that day the servants did eat, and drink, and rejoice, and wore crowns or garlands in token of their freedom; yet they went not out actually from under the hands of their masters, until the trumpet sounded, which was the tenth day of that month, then was their universal freedom published, as Mr. *Ainsworth* observes, and interprets this sounding of the trumpet, of the preaching of the Gospel. This trumpet was sounded, say the *Rabbins*, first by the *Sanhedrim*, and after that every master was to sound throughout the land, to publish that liberty to his servants. This was done on the tenth day, because that was the day of atonement, signifying their liberty owed itself to the atonement, which our Redeemer hath made for us, and he is the great publisher of it; and therefore we find the trumpet at his mouth, *Isa.* lxi. proclaiming this "acceptable year of the Lord."

Obj. But it will be yet objected; these wilful sinners, and those that have sinned against the Holy Ghost, have forfeited the benefit of Christ's redemption; why else is it said, there remains no more sacrifice for sin?

Answer. It is true, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, to be delivered up from the tender hands of a crucified Saviour, into the hands of the living God; yet this living God is the same Jesus, though in another appearance; for God even the Father hath *committed all judgment to the Son*, and therefore we read of the *wrath of the Lamb*, and the *wrath of God who liveth for ever and ever*, Rev. xv. 7, *and our God is a consuming fire*, and *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire*. The other Scriptures as well as this last, do all intend Christ, and they intend Christ not dealing with men, now in this appearance, as in his first, when he came as a priest to pour out his blood for them with wooings and entreaties, but avenging the slighting thereof as a king, therefore he now dies not for them any more, he did that once; but he lives for ever and ever, and by the power of his life he judges and brings them under; but still I say it is the same *Jesus*. That's one thing. And,

2dly, They are still said to be his people even under this judgment, *Heb.* x. 30. Immediately before the apostle sounds that terrible note in their ear, that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" he prefaceth it with this, "the Lord shall judge his people," which was spoken to, and of *Israel*, Deut. xxxii. 36. And good reason, he ought to have a title to them, for he bought them with His precious blood. Now though they may forfeit their own interest, yet they cannot extinguish His right. So the Lord saith in *Ezekiel*, *all souls are mine*; where yet he speaks of souls that die by their iniquity. Therefore,

3dly, The case of these sinners seems to be the same with those servants that went not out free the seventh year, whereof we read, Ex. xxi. It was the first law that was given after the ten commandments almost, that every *Hebrew* servant should go forth free the seventh year, but if he despised his liberty, (that is in effect the language, of his loving his master better than his freedom) he was to be brought to the Elders and to be bored through the ears with an awl, to the post of the door of his master's house, and was not to go forth the next seventh year, nor the next, till the year of *jubilee*; and then he was to go forth notwithstanding. And the reason given is, because the children of *Israel*, be they bond or free, were the Lord's servants, and therefore must know a time of liberty, let them sell themselves away how far soever; and so "the land must not be sold for ever: for the land is mine," saith the Lord," Lev. xxv. 23. "and ye are strangers and sojourners with me;" yet their servitude to the year of *jubilee* is called, a serving for ever. Upon which Mr. *Ainsworth*, hath this note on the place:

"that as their *ever* ended then at the *jubilee*; so the other legal ordinances, which are commanded to be kept for ever, had also their end at the *jubilee* of the Gospel; and the *Jews* who urge the observation of them, may be answered from their own writings, as he quotes *Rabbi Menachem* on the place, saying, it is a known thing that this word (*Legnolam*) for ever, is sometimes spoken of a determined time, as Ex. xxi. 6, he shall serve him for ever, *viz.* unto the year of *jubilee*, and sometimes it is spoken of length of days without knowledge of their limit, but yet they have a limit and end, as when they said, let king *David* live for ever."

If it be said, the case of the *Jews* was singular, all men are not upon that advantage. They were the people of God, nationally, by the express choice and covenant of God with their fathers. I answer, that therein they were but a typical first-fruits of the nation, and their land, of the whole earth; and therefore it is said, *the God of the whole earth shall he be called.*

Now let us consider, if all souls be the Lord's, and upon that account are not to be servants for ever, then none are to be excepted. And indeed consider but the value both God and Christ puts but upon one soul, preferring it to the whole world: And what shall be given to the Lord in exchange for so many millions of souls lost to him for ever; as the vulgar opinion holds. Besides that it is sin and not man, (not the creature of God, the soul of man) that is God's enemy, the apostle stating it so, Col. i. 21. *Enemies by wicked works*, sinners as sinners: not as men, but as committers or lovers of wicked works. Therefore the fiery indignation shall devour the adversaries, *quatenus* adversaries, not as the creatures of God; and if sin could be dealt with, out of man it were another case, but it being in itself a privation, it must be judged and punished in the subject, as you cannot bury death out of your sight, but by burying the carcase, so sin is condemned in the flesh, and the flesh is judged in man: If God should suffer sin ever to embondage man, where were his love? Man were for ever lost. But if in the destroying of sin God should forever abandon man, what difference is there? If hell never have end, sin can never have end: for if they live under wrath endlessly, sin is thereby perpetuated, but if sin be destroyed, the same moment man is saved. So that if God hath a mind, as he hath, (his holiness carrying him to it) to exterminate sin, it must be the salvation of the sinner. Therefore it seems to me, that if the Lord do not annihilate all wicked men, they must be allowed a return sometime, (though at what time I determine not; save at or before the delivering up the kingdom to the father) to their first state which they had in the fore-knowledge of God, and in their first parents before sin entered.

These are but the soft and low whispers of that trumpet, which in due time our great high priest the Lord Jesus shall set to his mouth, and with a loud and shrill sound shall publish through the earth and heavens; yea, and through all those dark regions of death and hell wheresoever this *jubilee*, and with it the power of his endless life, the spirit of life shall go forth from him, to quicken those inhabitants of death and hell, not to torment them any longer, as it hath done at first, and will to the last, avenging on them the despising of his grace; but then comforting them with the opening and disclosing the whole counsel of that grace, that was shut up in this womb of wrath and darkness, and sealed up in death. This is the interpreter, one of a thousand, that will shew unto man *His* righteousness, as the strength of His plea, not only from the nature of God who is love, but from and by reason of the counsel and the will of God, and this delightful project which will answer and resolve all the harshnesses and difficulties that seem to be in it, through our not looking to the end thereof. We see now but through a glass darkly, we know but in part; but Christ knows the whole of the case and will argue it, and plead it with such strength and advantage for every lost soul, that he will carry the day, and all those whom he reconciled by His death, will He first or last save by His life. Therefore as this is terror to fall into the hands of the living God, this ever-living Jesus; so after the judgments finished and the wrath executed, there is mercy in the issue, and as it is said to *Israel*, there is hopes in thy end; that all the lost children of *Adam* shall again return to their border, to their estate, in the favour and love of God, through the death and through the life of the Lord *Jesus* who was dead, and that for them; and is now alive, and that also for them; and behold he lives for evermore to make effectual the whole intention of His death, (however devils and men themselves against themselves have done their uttermost to frustrate it) and with and above this, his own concern, fully to uncover and declare His Father *to be love* throughout, and to be that light in whom is no darkness at all.

CHAPTER XIII.

A further clearing of the foregoing argument; from the great advantages Christ has to accomplish this work in His second appearance.

This will be much clearer if we consider that Christ hath a *second part* of his mediatory office to perfect at his next coming; which is the greater part, viz. the most powerful, though not the most costly or painful to himself; for so the first part was, being performed through great sufferings and death, in a state of humiliations: But now he comes as a king, not to entreat but to command, and to put life into his commands by that all-sufficiency of power he is invested with.

That this is the greatest part even towards his own saved ones, viz. the elect, that are the first-fruits of his creatures, appears, because even they are saved in hope till then, as the apostle shows, Rom. viii., and hope that is seen is not hope, therefore saith the apostle, Gal. v. 5, "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness through faith:"

Though we be justified persons in the present time; yet the glorious fruits of our justified state appear but in part and darkly, and we are saved, but in a mystery. Full many, and those great and glorious things are spoken of the city of the living God, of an absolute immunity and freedom from the guilt and power of sin, and all the consequents of it; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be: Therefore Christ's intercession in heaven and the intercession of his Spirit in our hearts relieves and helps us in this state of infirmity, watching over those enemies which yet remain in the land; over-ruling them, and bounding them, and turning that to good, which they attempt and practise to evil. And thus it will be till Christ's second and glorious appearing; and whether that of the apostle spoken of the prophets and worthies of the old time, that looked into the glorious promises made to the time of the gospel, but saw not the accomplishment of them (God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect) may not be applied here, viz., that it is not the will of God that we should be perfect, 'till that better thing, relating to the whole creation in Christ's second appearance be ready, I leave to consideration.

But if it be so that the perfecting of the saints by the actuating their complete form, and actualising of all these privileges and glory confirmed and sealed up to them in the blood of Christ awaits another season; even this second appearance of Christ, what marvel is it, if the rest of men be deferred to that season, for the reaping the fruits and advantages of his death: Wherein else have the first-fruits the pre-eminence, the world enjoys their good things here, whilst the saints receive their evil things.

Now that this is so, that the saints are adjourned to this season for the perfecting of their but inchoate salvation, is clear from many scriptures, Col. iii. 3; Eph. i. 10. chap. iii. 3; Rom. v. 10; Heb. 9, last, 1 Pet. i. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 49; 2 Thes. i. 6, 7, &c. with many others, besides what was named before.

2dly, The second thing to be shown is the great advantages our Lord Jesus is upon for this great work in his second appearance, over what he was in his first, which lies in such particulars as these:

1. He comes as a King.
2. As a Heavenly Man.
3. As a quickning Spirit.
4. In the full revelation of the Father.

I shall gather them up into two heads.

1. His office which he comes to discharge. And
2. His qualifications for it.

1st. He comes as a King, in the full exercise of his kingly office on earth, which he hath exercised only mystically and in heaven hitherto. Remarkable is that word of our Saviour, my Kingdom is not now from hence; implying that now is not the season of it, but it is to be shown in its proper times, as 1 Tim. vi. 16, viz., at his second coming. Not but that he comes then as a priest too, for he shall be a priest upon his throne, it is said, Zech. vi. 13. But the office he comes eminently to discharge, is his kingly office, which is to enforce his other offices: "For where the word of a king is, there is power," saith Solomon: Therefore it is said, thy people shall be willingnesses in the day of thy power, Ps. cx. 4. As who would say, no sooner shall Christ speak and intimate his will, but it shall be complied with.

Yea, he comes not only as a King, but as God's King; not in his own interest and behalf only, but his Father's, to bring back his creatures to him. Therefore,

2. It being his Father's work, he sets him forth and sends him with a most splendid equipage in his own glory and the glory of all the Holy Angels which attend him in this expedition from heaven. Christ hath a glory of his own which is surpassing resplendent, but when to this shall be joined his Father's glory and the Holy Angels', how great will this three-fold glory be! You have them altogether mentioned in this coming, Luke ix. 26. First he comes in his own heavenly glory as the Lord from Heaven, as much exceeding the glory of the first Adam in innocency, as heaven exceeds earth. The first man was of the earth earthly, (though fine earth, yet earth) but the second man is the Lord from Heaven. And therefore this second man's world and Paradise shall as much exceed the first, as heaven exceeds earth. Well may it then be called a New Earth. You read how Christ's face in the transfiguration shone as the sun, and his very garments were white as the light, whiter than any fuller on earth could make them: This was but a scheme in the days of his flesh, a scheme of his glory during his humiliation. Now that glory itself will present itself, and that not for a moment, but for continuance.

3. He comes as a quickning spirit; the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickning spirit: called last, not second as before; because this will chiefly appear in his last coming. Now the spirit is life, saith our Saviour, and it is the spirit that quickeneth. This is that life we shall be raised by, so assuredly that the apostle brings it with a *much more*, Rom. v. 10. "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled shall we be saved by his life." Now this is that which none but the elect have tasted the power of 'till this time, and they but tasted it. Indeed temporary believers may taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, viz. in gifts and common graces, but they never tasted of this life, for if they had they could never have fallen away; this is that the tree of life in Paradise was a figure of, which if Adam had eaten of, he had lived for ever; the Antitype itself appears in the New Jerusalem, and there, with a river of water of life, both which are prophesied of before by Ezekiel; the leaves of the trees are for medicine for the healing of the nations, the fruit for food. Christ, this tree of life, hath leaves as well as fruit. Leaves are the rich clothing or ornament of a tree, and preserves and shades the

fruit, and those that come to the fruit. Christ will not confound but heal the nations, and by these leaves dispose, purge, and prepare them for the fruit; so the Sun of Righteousness is promised to arise with healing in his wings. Not but that Christ will confound his enemies at the beginning of his second coming, those especially that he shall find in actual hostility against him; but when that work is over, then he will address himself to healing, even those whom he hath wounded, and to make alive those whom he hath killed. So likewise the river of life, spoken of in Ezek. xlvii. 8, 9. It is said, that these waters went down into the desert, &c., and being brought forth into the sea, the waters (even the waters of the sea) shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the river cometh: What more barren than the desert? And the sea is an emblem of the wicked. But what cannot eternal life do, the life of God, when he shall no more stand at the door and knock, but shall work within, shall be a *vis intus agens* as the plastic or formative virtue, or as the soul actuating or forming the body? Such is the force of that word, Eph. iii. 20, which speaks but of that which is the saints' experience in this dark time, yet they feel an energy *quod significat intimam presentiam, vim and efficacitatem qua Deus intime omnia operatur*, say the critics upon these words.

In this day of his second appearing he will be all life. The denomination is of the greater and better part; but here the whole throughout is all life, Col. iii. 4. When Christ who is our life shall appear, &c., and that life is Spirit, all of him is Spirit, from his incarnation, his conception, his birth, to his cross, his obedience unto death, it is all Spirit, and leavens the whole mass of human nature; and so his resurrection, his exaltation and glory, it is all Spirit, and shall now so appear, there's the accent; he hath been so all along before a few in an enigmatic dark way, but he will be so now manifestly, openly, universally; therefore as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive, for he is the Lord, the Spirit; his words are Spirit and life, he said it in the days of his flesh; but now it shall appear; his flesh was then meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, but now it shall be justified in his spiritual body. This is that great Transmutation, the true philosopher's stone, which men have been hunting after; the Transmuter, the Transformer that hath given a taste of his virtue and power in the elect all along, and but a taste, to what shall then appear; therefore we read of that change in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Spirits have power over matter and work in an instant. I say not this shall appear in all presently, but in every man in their order; first in the first-fruits, then after judgment hath had its course (which, how long that will be, I cannot determine) but before the delivering up the Kingdom by the Son to the Father, he will manifest this power upon the whole human nature. This I am led to apprehend and believe from plentiful evidence. But,

Fourthly, and lastly, he shall appear then in the glory of the Father also; not only as a quickning Spirit (which as a man and Mediator he is made) but as God co-essential with the Father, exercising the same creating power as God that quickneth all things, and to whom all things live, as our Saviour himself saith; as the Son of man he hath all power given him in heaven and in earth, power over all flesh, and to quicken whom he will, which is a larger power than he did own or exercise in the days of his flesh, but shall then come into the full exercise of it; but as God, he comes forth in the original right of that power with the Father; and so he speaks and 'tis created. As man he is anointed with the name, the virtue of the Father; but as God he is the very name and anointing itself, and the power to declare and manifest this name, this virtue to the full; to show all men plainly and fully of the Father, and to exhibit and show himself *as he is*; and so shall every eye see him, for he will be both light and eye, and object to every man; in this light we shall see light, yea they also *that have pierced him*, which of all sinners should most likely be debarr'd this cheering sight; and lest we should think it restrained to the Jews, it is added, that "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of him;" which is an expression of a mourning of compunction from a spirit of grace, not from despair, but as in Zachary, for an only son, and a first-born, and this shall all the tribes of the earth do.

And that which shall influence them to this, and thus melt them down, is that glorious revelation, that clear exhibition he shall make of himself and of his Father. This is the message, saith the apostle, that we have heard of him, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, and in another place, God is Love; but then he shall deliver it not as a message, but reveal it as a light of glory within us, and round about us, taking off the vail both from the face of the Father and his *own* face, and from off our hearts; that which we have not heard shall be told us, that which we have not seen shall we consider; this is implied in that promise of seeing him as he is, Isa. lii. 19, intimating a disguise hath been upon him hitherto, which shall then be cast off, and the design of the whole shall break forth and beautify every part, every step in this glorious project.

Obj. But it will be objected; we make Christ kinder than he makes himself in his next appearing, for he saith in that place before quoted, Luke ix. 26, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

Answer. This is not denied, but that Christ's appearing will be to the shame of enemies and apostates; and many shall rise, not only in that metaphorical resurrection in Daniel, but in the proper resurrection of the body, to shame and contempt, and that everlasting in the sense we have opened before, and to the resurrection of damnation, as our Saviour himself witnesseth, John v. 29; but all this hinders not, but ere Christ hath finished his work he will bring things to

another pass; that he will not be ashamed and confounded world without end; this seems to be the case spoken to Isa. xlix, wherein the Lord Jesus Christ is brought in as bewailing his lost labour upon the Jews, verse 4. I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain, as he himself tells them, weeping over Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, but ye would not?" Well, this hath cost them dear, Isa. xxix. 22, 23; chap. xlix. 18, 24; chap. liii. 10, 11, 12. "Your house is left unto you desolate; and henceforth you shall not see me" (as for above seventeen hundred years hath been verified upon them) "until ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Is here not a revolution of grace and favour intimated to them? so in this text, Isa. xlix. 4; after that bemoaning of himself, I have laboured in vain, he takes heart again in these words, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." What judgement is that? Why the same prophet tells us, not only in the sequel of the chapter, where the Gentiles are promised to make up the loss of the Jews, but chap. liii. 10: "He shall see his seed. he shall prolong his days, he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." And is not every man the travail of his soul? Did not he pour out his soul to death for the whole world? And can he be satisfied with less than the salvation of all that he thus travailed of? And if the reproach of the church is promised to be done away from off all the earth, Isa. xxiv, and this is part of the reproach, and a great part ("We have travailed, we have been in pain, we have brought forth nothing but wind; neither are the inhabitants of the world fallen," Isa. xxvi.) then sure the reproach of the head of the church, yea of the grace of God who gave Christ to die for all men, must much more be done away; shall that bring forth nothing but wind, or that which is worse to the greatest part of mankind? Shall that always be under the reproach of barrenness and weakness? Is there not the womb that is called upon to rejoice above Hagar or the law? Shall Christ fail or be discouraged in his enterprise, of abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light? Or shall he do his work but in part, when God hath given him power over all flesh, that all that he hath given him (for so the words are to be rendered, or the whole, viz. the whole mass or lump of human nature) he shall give eternal life unto them? First indeed, to the first-fruits only, which are the elect, but in due time to the rest, one as well as the other, as the Lord promised to the land of Israel in their time of restitution, Ezek. xlvii. 14: "You shall inhabit it one as well as another. Then is the day when Jacob shall not be ashamed, neither shall his face wax pale, but when he seeth his children, the work of my hands in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name," &c., and Isa. xxix. 22, 23: "Yea, they shall see and flow together, and their heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted to thee," &c., Isa. lx. 5, which places have a beginning of fulfilling in the restoring of the Jews, but shall have a further fulfilling ere the close of that glorious day of Christ's reign.

To conclude this evidence from Christ's glorious capacity, to make this universal and wonderful change, even to make all things new upon his throne; he shall therefore be said to come in the glory of the Father (the original glory) because he shall let in the *light of eternity* upon men, and shall so uncover his Father, as he was never yet uncovered, and exhibit and present him, so as he was never yet seen, but by himself, who lay eternally in his bosom; at which brightness all the light we have hitherto rejoiced and rested in, shall be done away, as being but in part, and all those dispensations that we have thought so bright shall pass like thick clouds; those discoveries that we have taken for the face of God, shall be shown to be coverings, and all times and dispensations of times of this world, which have like Peter's sheet been let down from Heaven for us to look upon, having served their season, shall be taken up into Heaven, and time itself shall pass into eternity; and nothing shall enter or remain there but that which was before this corrupted world, for all things were good in the beginning.

I shall close this section with that of the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 7, to ver. 10, which takes in the substance of all that hath been said upon this head; the words are these: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the Princes of this world knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," &c., in which last words the apostle drops an apology or excuse for the Princes of this world not receiving Christ, though it be not the scope or drift of the apostle, I grant, for that is another thing; neither doth it excuse them *a toto* as they say, either guilt or punishment, but *a tanto* only; the excuse is the same as the apostle grants elsewhere, in the case of the Jews, Acts iii. 17, and that is ignorance: "I wot brethren, through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers;" and yet it is the judgement of many, and those men of note, that the Scribes and Pharisees that pursued Christ to his death, were guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost; therefore it was not simple or total ignorance, but the want of such a knowledge of him, as is given to the elect by effectual calling, and we are told in this text what it was; it was an ignorance of the Lord of glory, and the occasion of this their mistake, and not discerning, was the veiled appearance in which he then was, during the state of his humiliation, his glory but sparingly then shining forth; it not being the season of it; as it is not for the saints, yet to shine forth until Christ's second appearance. And therefore, saith St. John, 1. chap. iii. 2, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew not him;" only the spirit reveals him to the elect in the present time. But then in his second coming the case shall be otherwise, as ye have heard, and this will be not only a spiritual revelation of him, as never yet was

to the most eminent saint for fulness and perfection, but his person shall be revealed in a visible glory, beyond any created glory of the sun, (or if any thing else were more glorious) and this bodily or visible glory shall be also all spiritual, yea all spirit; shall then impress the mind as well as the senses, and shall work with his spirit to the causing a submission to him, and a reception of him. And until such reception, it will be a torment intolerable to every creature that stands out against him, or is not in union with him. So the grace and sweetness of Christ in his divine excellency, which shall then shine forth in its strength, and shall pierce even to hell itself, will be the torment of the damned in hell, while they abide there, and when the Lord hath finished that work, then will he turn the *other* side of this glory upon them. For as the pillar of cloud and fire, it hath a light and a dark side and that shall revive and comfort those whom the other side did cruciate and afflict; and so shall there the highest proof be given of the truth of that word, Deut. xxxii. 29, "I, even I am he, and there is no God like me. I kill, and I make alive, I wound, and I heal," &c. The same God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, God man, by the same life and glory of his second appearance and last coming, shall both wound and heal, first kill and then make alive.

The punishment of the damned is distinguished into *Pœna Damni* and *Pœna Sensus*; and this punishment of loss, the sense of it (for that they shall have) is as great as the sense of pain; therefore our Saviour tells the Jews, as an aggravation, that many shall come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven, and the children of the kingdom shall be cast out, Math. viii. 12. And O! What weeping and gnashing of teeth will this occasion! Thus Dives lifted up his eyes in hell, and saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. Now, to make this punishment of loss exquisite, they must have a knowledge and sense of the glory and felicity of the saved ones, such as they had not while in the body here. Therefore they shall be enlightened by this glory, in which Christ shall appear to a sense of what they have lost, and therefore this glory shall appear otherwise to them than while on earth; then they dispised it, choosing their own will and pleasure before it, nay, looking on God and Christ as the darkest and most melancholy objects in the world, and as seeking themselves, and tying up poor man from the best enjoyment of himself, as the tyrants of this world; but when God shall appear in this glorious revelation of himself in Christ, in this time, all love, all light without darkness! O how unspeakable will the torment be, to be shut out of this bosom, these embraces! to want an interest in this life, in this pleasure! in this joy! O how will this set them a weeping and wailing! As on the other hand it is said, the saints and the saved ones, to commend their own mercy, shall go forth and look on the carcases of the men that have transgressed, whose worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched. And this is one reason of the punishment both of devils and wicked men, being deferred to this time, because this presence and appearance of Christ with the church on earth, is a main ingredient and aggravation of their torment, therefore they are said to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, 2 Thes. i. 9, (as the times of refreshing also are said to be from the presence of the Lord, Acts iii.) the presence and glory of Christ being the inflicting cause of their punishment; therefore they cry to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, Rev. vi. 16; which if so terrible in that change he made in the Roman empire at the casting down the heathen dragon in Constantine's time, what will it be in that time, when he shall put down all rule, authority and power, and take all into his own hand, and appear on his throne in the glory of his Father?

All this will down; but the revolution, the turning the other side of this glory, and revealing to them and giving them an interest in it is incredible. Yet it having a power to heal and restore, as well as to torment, yea, healing being the proper work and efficiency of it, and the other but occasionally or accidentally, who shall for ever seal up this power and virtue of it, when the nature of God, who is love, doth not do it? We say, that power is in vain that is never reduced into act, and therefore when the great gulf or space of time which God hath set for the declaration of his justice in the punishment of the damned is filled up, and that the piercing beams of this glory that hath shined into hell itself, through their *non-interest* therein, hath fulfilled the afflicting and punishing part; then how easy, how agreeable is it to the Lord to take off those chains of darkness that hold them from any part in it, and to take off that veil, and to let them into the apprehension of this great and glorious counsel of imparting it to them also, and letting them forth into the participation of it? I will not say I have an express text for it; but there is a text which favours such an apprehension, Isa. xxiv. 21, to the end: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord of Hosts shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth, and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days they shall be visited." What day is this? It is the day of the Lord's reign on the earth, that is manifested from the next verse: "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Sion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Well then, what is the pit or prison, but tophet or hell, chap. iii. 33, (which is called a prison, a place of custody, 1 Pet. iii. 19.) "Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord," (this life, this spirit, this glory of the man Christ Jesus) "like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." But that which I bring the place for is, that after many

days these prisoners shall be visited or found wanting, which sounds to our purpose, that through a visitation of grace, they shall be delivered, when their punishment is fulfilled.

To sum up all; this three-fold quality of glory, as a Heavenly man, as a quickning spirit, and as the Most High God, all speak out love and grace; for what is the glory of Heaven but its amplitude, its clarity, its beneficence and its powerful influence, which are all the signal names, virtues, and properties of love, which as the heavens are large, enfolding, encompassing all things, and taking this globe into its cherishing bosom and embraces, quickning, cheering and nourishing every plant, every creature, with its comfortable warming, fertilizing beams and influences, yea, the binding influence of *Orion*, is for the advantage of the earth and plants, and of the bodies of creatures, digesting the cold raw humours, and by an *Antiperistasis* making the innate heat more intense, and killing worms and weeds that would destroy the seed; and the clarity, the lightsomeness of the heavens, is a figure of this light and serenity of love, and the power and rule of the heavens which these sublunary things can by no endeavours turn from or resist, is the all-charming, all-conquering, resistless power of love, which can prevail when law and threatnings can do nothing. So likewise, he is that spirit, that quickning spirit. Spirits in bodily things are the *apex*, the unity of power, the quintessence of extraction, the combination of all the shattered forces and virtues through the whole extension of a vegetable; so in animals, the spirits are the finest, the purest, the sweetest, and brightest blood: and so in God himself, his love is the spirit of his God-head; there are spirits many, the spirit of bondage and fear, but the spirit eminently is love, therefore the New Testament which sows this love, is called the ministration of the spirit. This was a seal of love I received from a dying saint, who for weakness, could not speak much, but left this with me, that *the Spirit is Love*, which I understood not at that time, so well as I bless God I have done since. And then,

Lastly, God hath recognised himself expressly by the name of Love. God is he from whom all things flow as their original fountain, and as they come from him they are all lovely; in him we all live, and move, and have our being, and all our pleasant and delightsome motions. And the very disorder and evil that is broke in, he turns it to good; so that Christ coming in the glory of the Father, comes in the glory of Love, which tenders all his births as a father does his children, and having a power, cures their diseases, and casts none away, for if the man Christ Jesus be heavenly, large, pure, beneficent, if his Spirit be the flower of love, what is God his Father, who is the Heaven of Heavens?

CHAPTER XIV.

A further evidence to this hypothesis, arising from the relation and proportion, the redemption of the first-fruits bears to the deliverance of the rest.

THIS argument we have, Rom. viii. 19. to verse 23, with which, other places also join in testimony, as Rom. xi. 16, and 31 verse.

The words in the former place are these "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly" (or not by choice) "but by reason of him who subjected the same in hope; because the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

The words contain an argument of the greatness of that glory that shall be revealed in believers, the argument ariseth from the expectation, that the whole creation hath of that time, and the glorious fruits and advantage that shall redound from thence to the whole creation, which is no less than the deliverance of the whole creation, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The force of this argument rests upon two terms.

First, What is meant by the creature itself, and the whole creation.

Secondly, What is meant by their being delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

By the first term (the creature) some understand the creation below man, the sensitive and vegetative creature, plants, and animals, that these shall be made incorruptible. If the text reach these creatures (which I shall not now dispute; it being not to my argument) it strengthens our argument, and is itself an argument *a fortiori* for us. For my part, I take the creature and the whole creation, here, primarily and principally, if not wholly, to intend man, the human nature and kind, and that for these reasons, to omit others.

1st. For that the creature in verse 19, 20, 21, where the apostle speaks of the expectation of the creature, the subjection of the creature to vanity, and the deliverance of the creature, must either be taken indefinitely, which is equal to an universal, or at least eminently, for that rank of creatures, and for all in that rank, of which the apostle was discoursing, which was of men, for such are the sons of God; who are to be manifested, and in whom such eminent glory is to be revealed; it being no way congruous to leave out the noblest creature, and to give the title of the creature to brutes and plants, as if they only expected this manifestation, &c., but,

2ndly. This is put out of doubt by verse 22, where it is said, "the whole creation groaneth," it being no way congruous nor true, to call beasts and plants (which are but a part, and that less principal) the whole creation. Man may be said to be the whole creation, as by way of eminence, containing in himself the excellencies and perfections of all the creatures below him, and being their immediate and next end to which they are ordained to serve; but to give this title of the whole creation to the inferior creatures, and leave out men, or the greatest part of men, is such a solecism and crime against the dignity of

human nature, and against all order and reason itself, as no man can undertake the patronage of. Nor,

3dly. Can these actions, passions, hopes, that are ascribed to the creature be otherwise than improperly applied, or attributed to the inferior creatures, such as waiting with earnest expectation, or with an out-stretched neck, being made subject to vanity, not willingly? what will or choice is there in the dumb creatures? but these things do properly agree to human nature, which is indued with these faculties of soul, understanding and will, though miserably vitiated, tainted, and corrupted.

4thly. There is another reason in the context which lies deeper and closer; showing what the apostle means by the creature, and the whole creation, viz., all that part of men that lie short of that glorious privilege which believers at the present partake of, viz., the first-fruits of the spirit, for so he opens himself, verse 23; "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies." Wherein he shows that this manifestation of the sons of God, this glory to be revealed in us, is a greater thing than the first-fruits of the spirit. And therefore as well we that have the first-fruits of the spirit, as those that have not the same, even we groan. Now how incongruous and absurd a negation, would this seclusion of the irrational creatures, from the first-fruits of the spirit be, who must first be capable of reason, before they are capable of the spirit. Therefore the apostle cannot, in propriety of speech, sense or argument, be thought to intend (at least primarily) the inferior creation; though what advantage they may have by the restitution of all things as I deny not, so it is not my business here either to dispute or define.

Thus have we gained the first point, which is the main, that by the creation is meant man, (primarily at least) then by the whole creation must be meant all men, every man.

Obj. If you say, how do wicked men groan, they concern not themselves about these matters, they are not exercised about them, and when they hear of them they desire them not, they rather desire this world might last for ever, for they have their good things here?

Answer. They that have their good things here no doubt desire rather the continuance of the enjoyment of them, than to be stripped of them and go to hell; but how few are those that enjoy such a life of pleasure that do not groan?

But 2ndly. Tell me how the dumb creatures, and how the heavens and the earth do groan, as some do interpret this place, and after the same manner will I show you, that wicked men even in their sins and pleasures do groan, finding shortness and vanity in them. It was a motto which a noble-man wrote over his summer-house in his garden: "There is a weariness in pleasure, as well as in labour." But to answer fully; in that spirit that brought forth the whole creation, in that spirit doth universal nature, which stands in that spirit, groan, with groanings, in a sense unutterable, or by the ear imperceptible.

The rest is easy, the deliverance of whole nature, of every creature in it, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. I shall not enquire how far, or into what degree, but delivered they are to be, and that from the bondage of corruption, and that as a mercy, a privilege, as the object and fruit of this hope; and sure that implies more than the raising of their bodies to judgement, and the immortalizing of them for punishment; for who would not, might he have his choice granted him, desire rather to be annihilated?

But what may be further desired upon this point may be clearer, when we have strengthened and established this doctrine upon its true basis and grounds, which is couched in those words of the creature's earnest expectation of the manifestation of the sons of God, implying that the manifestation of the sons of God, bears the same relation to the deliverance of the rest of men, as the manifestation of Christ in glory, doth to our manifestation in glory, who believe in him, as the apostle saith, Col. iii. 3; which not only leads the way, but hath a casual influence likewise thereto.

And though this may seem strange, yet how to understand the apostle without this supposition I see not, and we are not without other scriptures concurring with us.

For first, we find the Jews under the promise and hope of obtaining mercy through our mercy, as the apostle writes to the Romans, chap. xi. 31, which implies not only an order of time, but of casualty; when the Jews shall see in the Gentile christians recovered from under that apostacy, they have lain under during the reign of anti-Christ; when they shall see Christ by the brightness of his appearing to have destroyed the *man of sin*, to have destroyed the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations, and the churches of the Gentiles clarify into the brightness of this appearance; this will provoke the Jews to jealousy: I say, when they shall see their Messias in the arms of the Gentiles, or the Gentiles rather in his arms, thus beloved, thus restored and beautified, this will have a casual influence into their recovery; for I can by no means think but it must be some more eminent mercy than the Gentiles have yet found, it must be the restitution of the Gentiles that must operate upon the Jews.

2ndly. We find the Jews recovering themselves into their ancient place and state in the favour of God, will conduce likewise to the opening of the eyes, of those nations that yet sit out of the light of the gospel; as well as it will be the advantage of them that have received Christ before them; see for this, Ezek. xvi. 61, where Sodom and Samaria are promised to be given to Jerusalem for daughters, when God remembers his covenant with her, as in the days of her youth, and establishes unto her an everlasting covenant; which proves clearly it cannot be meant of any time yet past, but is to come.

3dly. This will further and clearer appear to us if we consider, that the elect and those

which are saved in this present time, bear the relation of the first-fruits to the rest of men; and how the apostle argues from that notion in the case of the Jews. And it is as true here if the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy, and not for ever to be cast away. If the root be holy so are the branches.

4thly. This would not at all be strange to us, if we did well ponder and consider, that order and subordination that God hath established and revealed, whereby as God hath made Christ the only mediator between him and men: Christ hath in a sort, made these first-fruits of the creation taken from amongst men, subordinate mediators between him and the rest of men. Christ shares the honour of his own work and office with his ministers and servants, making them sub-commissioners, vice-ambassadors under him and in his stead, co-workers, co-builders with God and Christ, and the Lord puts his words into their mouths, to plant the heavens, and lay the foundation of the earth. Makes them his voice in the new creation and calls them Saviours in Obadiah, ministers of the spirit, his battle-axe, his weapons of war to beat down, to demolish the old frame and to judge the world, yea angels; gives nations for them, and for their sakes sends to Babylon and brings down the nobles thereof, and the house of Judah as his goodly horse in the battle, out of whom comes the corner, the nail, the battle-bow; and her governors, like to a hearth of fire in a wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf. And as thus for judgement, so likewise for salvation. Therefore said our Saviour, "As thou hast sent me into the world; so have I sent them into the world." Upon a like errand, with the like commission and power. And as their ministry in weakness is blessed to the elect, so their glory hath a ministry of power committed to it which shall work upon the rest. Whereby it is that they shall be enabled to do greater works than Christ did in the flesh. Which what can it be, but the giving of the spirit ministerially, as Christ himself expounds it, John vii. 38: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." This he spake of the spirit which they that believed on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified; but being glorified this promise was in beginning, and the first-fruits shed down on the apostles, but the harvest and full crop of it awaits Christ's next coming and the saints with him, when they shall not only ministerially give gifts out of the spirit, as then was done, even to unsanctified men, (grace being only given by their ministry to them, who were *ordained to eternal life* among the first-fruits) but shall build the old waste places, and raise up the foundations of many generations, repair breaches and restore paths to dwell in; not in the letter, for that strangers shall do for them, but in the spirit, as the words following do show, where it is said they shall be named *Priests of the Lord*, and men shall call you the *Ministers of our God*, Isa. lxi. 4, 5, 6, with chap. lviii. 12.

This giving of the spirit by Christ as a Lord, and that full revelation of times and the works and mysteries of God, was that greater thing that Christ obtained *by going to his Father*, which was his glorification, and from this his exalted state, he is said, now to speak from heaven, Heb. xii. 25. In like manner when the elect shall appear or be manifested with him in glory, (as the word properly is to be rendered) they shall then have under Christ, that full and open vision and revelation of God to carry forth to men. And withal shall be instances, and examples of the glorious truth and efficacy of it in their own persons and spirits, which shall add great force and authority to their words, that with a spiritual energy, as spirits, they shall enter the hearts and consciences of men; thus speaking in a sort from heaven, from the very experience of it in themselves, which shall be visible also to every eye, and shall be able also to give an eye ministerially to those that have it not; whereby through those sharp arrows the king's enemies shall fall under them: yea, as Isaiah saith, shall fall down before them; yea, make supplication, (they are the words in the prophet) as Nebuchadnezzar fell down to Daniel, saying, "surely God is in thee." They shall be sensible of divine presence and virtue in them, which shall bring them over. For the saints shall then appear and work as one spirit with Christ their head, who is one spirit with the Father his head, who is Love, who as rivers of living water shall fill them, and out of their bellies, as pipes of conveyance, next under Christ, shall issue forth to the barren places and seas, that have been so to that time. Though in this with a difference of time and order for some, viz., the survivors to Christ's coming, that have escaped of the nations, those sweeping judgements which shall carry off multitudes, shall be delivered into this glorious liberty, or liberty of glory of the church, at the beginning or commencement of this manifestation of the sons of God, (or at least in the course of their reign with Christ) and these other nations shall be given to them as daughters. Perhaps after a time in which they have been first servants, but the rest, viz., those that were cut off before that time, they may yet be brought back afterwards, before or at Christ's delivering the kingdom to the Father.

If this yet stick, and will not go down, let it be considered, that God in all the dispensations of his grace, hath had respect to the relations of the elect, though but natural, yea though remote, as to Noah's whole family, though Ham was one of them, and to Ishmael, because he was of the flesh of Abraham, and Lot's son-in-law had the offer of preservation. Yea, had there been ten righteous persons in Sodom, all Sodom had been spared for those ten's sake. And in the New Testament, when the heads of families received the gospel, the whole household was baptized. Now the elect being the first-fruits of men, the rest are the lump of this first-fruits, and in some sort are their body and fulness. And therefore as they wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies; so they cannot but have a longing for the redemption of

this their body mystical, even all men. And as Christ will be a priest upon his throne, so these in their out-goings of heart (being like to Christ) unto all their own kind. And as God often hath heard one prophet intercede for a whole nation, (as Moses and others for Israel) how can he deny the blood, the intercession of his own Son, with all his mystical members filled with the love of God, and having a perfect knowledge of it, able to plead and extend it to the uttermost. And as the posterity of the Jews are beloved *for their fathers' sake*, so there is the same reason for the whole human kind to be beloved for the elect's sake, who are the first-fruits and fathers of the rest. And as God appearing to us and showing himself as he is in Christ, makes us like Christ, 1 John iii. 2, so Christ's appearing in his own peculiar body of the elect, and first-fruits, may congruously be judged to be ordained to have the same fruits and effects upon the rest of men. Though whether he call them up to the same degree of glory I determine not: for as the apostle saith, that there is one glory of the sun, and another of the moon, another of the stars, and one star differs from another star in glory; so also he saith, is the resurrection of the dead. Yet all shall be rendered glorious, therefore delivered and saved; yea, every eye shall see him, and shall see his body mystically glorified: and nothing so powerful, so operative as glory, the glory of God. Therefore they must be transformed by it, the sight and change are reciprocal, cause and effect to each other, they cannot see except they be changed, as they cannot be changed except they see, they may see to be confounded and shall so, till they have borne their shame. But the operation of glory rests not there. This glory being the glory of love, whose proper work is to save and heal, and to wound only in order to a judicious and orderly healing. Therefore as Christ is the first-fruits of the elect, and God's going forth in Christ is first and immediately in order to their restoration, so the elect are the first-fruits of the creation, and God's going forth through Christ, to heal and restore them, is in order to the saving and restoring of the whole, which are to be delivered into the liberty of this glory. Christ immediately takes hold of the seed of Abraham, but through the seed of Abraham he takes hold of all the nations, all the families of the earth and blesseth them. Let no man think to avoid the dint of this by carrying a *Synechdoche, a pars pro toto.* I know not then how any argument can be safely grounded on any scripture, as the apostle doth from a like phrase, 1 Cor. xv. 27, from the word all, Ps. viii. 6, "he hath put all things under his feet," who might not have found a *Synechdoche* there? But they must then be quicker scented than the apostle, for he takes it plainly and honestly, that then nothing is excepted. So in the present case the elect are the first-fruits of his creatures; if the first-fruits be holy the lump is holy. I say, since the lump is not all but a great part; why then, if it be but a part be it never so great a part, tis not the lump: the lump is that which remains. It is but a large first-fruits if it take not in all, the lump is all; and so the branches take in all; if the root be holy so are the branches; if they be of the humane kind they are branches, though they are not the root.

But that which will decide all is the apostle's own application of this, where he uses the metaphor with a particular aim at the Jews; where he makes the Father the root, and the succeeding offspring, until their glorious restitution, the branches. He doth not say many of them, or the greater part of them shall be restored and saved, as verse 26: "But all Israel shall be saved," and so verse 22, "God hath concluded them all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all." In the like sense are the elect the first-fruits of the whole creation, and therefore do infer the sanctification and salvation of every individual of the human nature.

CHAPTER XV.

An Argument for this Hypothesis drawn from the Nature of Man, as each Individual is a Compendium and Abstract of the entire Creation; and so not probable to be cast away for ever.

In every individual man is, not only by a figure in rhetorical speech, but in true propriety of speaking, a *microcosm*, comprehending in him all the parts of the microcosm; and that not only whether we consider him a part in the two constitutives of him, his soul and body: but in the whole complex or result of his person consisting of both. For first, in his body he contains all *vegetative and sensitive nature*, and in his soul or spirit all *rational and intellectual nature*, with all the virtues, excellencies, and perfections of both: in which respect it is said, God breathed into man at his creation, the breaths or spirits of lives, in the plural number, that is of all lives, vegetative, sensitive, rational, intellectual.

2ndly. Solomon saith, God hath placed or *set* the world in man's heart, as a flower in its bed or principle in which it grows. And,

3dly. From hence it was that Adam gave names to all the creatures; and whatsoever he called them, that was the name thereof; the reason of man being the *formal determination of their specific natures*, differences, and kinds. And,

4thly. Our Saviour prefers upon this just account, the soul of man (of one man and of every individual) before the whole world of things below the soul: saying, "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" and therefore the redemption of the soul is precious.

But this will much more appear if we consider the person of man consisting of soul and body; that it is a *unity, persona quasi per se una;* now a unity is the *apex*, the conspiration of a multitude, or variety *into one point;* in which point all lines do meet, and take mutual hold of it, as in a spire or pyramid, or in a centre of a globe.

None but intellectual nature are or can be called persons, God, angels, and men; and it

is by and for this *spiritual* nature that they are thus called, and qualified for this appellation. And therefore in every person, *eo nomine*, as he is a person, the *Supreme Unity*, which is God; who comprehends all things: (all being being in himself in one) shadows and figures forth himself, and presents and seats himself, as in a glass or mirror to be seen and reflected on, in which respect, and for which cause, man is said to be made in the image of God.

Now to bring home the argument; can we think so many *millions* of such precious souls, each of which is an entire world, each of which is worth more than the whole world of inferior beings, should be deemed such vile and abject things as to be *eternally abandoned* of God, and lost forever, never to be visited, never to be recovered to the glory of the Creator that made them? See how passionately the Lord reflects on souls *eo nomine*, as made by him, prescinding from redemption, (which is a new creation,) but merely with relation to their first make, Isa. lvii. 16, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath: for so the spirits should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." A consequence not to be admitted or allowed; nay not once to be imagined.

For if each soul be a unity, a figure, a shadow of the Supreme Unity (not a dead but a living shadow) and that all lines of being and beauty meet in this *apex*, and unity of the intellectual spirit; no such individual soul can be for ever abandoned; but the whole nature of things must suffer therein, as it did when Christ was crucified: which made a heathen that saw that *deliquium* upon the sun, say, *aut natura solvitur, aut Deus naturæ patitur.* If so many millions of these intellectual substances be never looked upon, or visited with redemption, not one saint is *completely saved*, for if each spirit be an entire world, all spirits are in each spirit; as the soul is in every part of the body. And therefore as it is said of the body, through the *one spirit* in all the members, that "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it: so is it in the mystical body, which is in union (through this union of the intellectual spirit) *with all spirits*, and the whole nature of things, and, therefore those which have the first-fruits of the spirit, do with the creation groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, not redemption of their own particular bodies only, but the redemption of the *universal body*; else they should come short of the creation, and those that have not the first-fruits of the spirit, for they wait for the manifestation of the sons of God. Whence is it that natural men wait for the manifestation of the sons of God? but for their interest therein; because they as seeds shall spring up in that manifestation: for as believers are *Christ's seed*, (the seed of his peculiar mystical body immediately born to him) so are the rest of men *their seed and fulness*; and therefore they have an interest and concern likewise immediately in the quickning of these seeds in due time, till which be done they are not full and perfect. This is most concisely, yet truly held forth in that scale of the apostle. The head of the woman, (that is in the mystery, the natural creation, *is the man*, the head of every man) *every spiritual man is Christ; the head of Christ is God*; which shows the linking and concatenation, the mutual interest and combination, the entering of one link of this golden chain into the other, *making all one*; all a unity, each running into all, and being all, and all being in each one. Which proves what I said before, that the saints are not fully glorified without the rest of mankind. Nay, that Christ is not full without them, nor the manifestative glory of God himself full and perfect without the recovering the whole. For further satisfaction in this argument, I shall refer the reader to that incomparable and learned pen of Mr. Peter Sterry, in his discourse of the soul, in that excellent treatise of his upon the Freedom of the Will. Though I have yet more to add upon this head of man's being the fulness of the creation of God.

CHAPTER XVI.

A further Evidence of this Hypothesis, from the Higher Eulogies of Love in the Scriptures.

Whatsoever the Lord commends to the creature, he stands forth himself as the highest image and example in it to the creature: this being the highest and most effectual way of commending any thing to another, (especially to an inferior) and the higher the superior is, so much the more forcible is his own practice and example to commend it. God is not as the Scribes and Pharisees that laid heavy burthens upon others, such as they would not touch with one of their own fingers: but when he bids us be holy, he gives us this reason, "For I the Lord your God am holy:" when he calls us to be perfect, he doth the same: "Be you perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Now there is nothing the Lord commends to men so much as *love*; yea, it is love that commends all to *God himself*, Eph. i. 4. That we should be "holy and without blame before him in love." Love is as the sparkle in the diamond, even in holiness and unblamableness itself: as if holiness and unblameableness had all its beauty, all its acceptance in love, as indeed it hath, for, 1 Cor. xiii. the apostle, after a large enumeration of choicest gifts and excellencies, as tongues, prophecies, understanding all mysteries, all knowledge, all faith, yea all acts of charity, and lastly giving our bodies to be burned, saith, that without love all is nothing: but love is all, and where love is, nothing is wanting; if that love be perfect in kind, there is long-suffering, there is kindness, there is no envy, no vaunting, no puffing up, no unseemly behaviour, no self-seeking; love is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, (which I would rather interpret, comprehendeth all things, for reasons hereafter mention-

ed) never faileth, when prophecies shall fail, when tongues shall cease, when knowledge shall vanish away. In a word, it is greater than *faith* and *hope;* and, Rom. xiii. 10: "Love is the fulfilling of the law," as the apostle shows by induction of several particulars, with a general clause in the end of all; if there be any other commandment it is all *comprehended* in this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." For love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore he concludes, love is the fulfilling of the law. So the apostle to Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 5, saith, love is the very scope, the end of the commandment; which is as much as to say, the fruit, the flower, the perfection of it; yea, so doth the Lord study love, so doth he delight to see love in his creatures, that he designs this image to be brought forth upon the very brute creatures, and the fiercest of them in the restoration, Isa. xi. 6: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the suckling together, and a little child shall lead them; and the cow and bear shall feed them, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

Now as the Psalmist argueth, "He that made the eye, shall not he see?" so may we in this case. He that teacheth love to all his creatures, and works it in them, shall not he love? Yea, why doth he lay it as a law upon all his creatures: but because it is the law of his own nature and being? for so saith the apostle, "God is love." Not only that he hath love, nor only that he doth love, but that *he is love.* And you can no more separate love from him, than you can separate his essence or his nature from him. Doth God require love of all, yea, *love to all men;* yea, and that we should abound in it, not only saints one towards another, but towards all men, 1 Thess. iii. 12. Yea, that we should love not only our neighbours, but our enemies; bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute us; and though we cannot delight in them, yet to forgive them, and not to be overcome of their evil, but to overcome evil with good? And shall the evil, yea, the despite of the creature, set the Creator, who is the very Omnipotency of goodness, so hard, that he shall never overcome it, never recover it into the arms of his goodness and love? Are all gifts and excellencies in the creature, or the creature in those gifts and excellencies nothing without love? Is love the diamond, the sparkle of the diamond, even in holiness and unblameableness itself? O then let us fear to set up a wisdom, a power, a justice, a holiness, a greatness in God, without love! Without love as its ground, its root, its essence, its design, its fruit, its image, its end. Is love the fulfilling of the law? Is all obedience to a letter, without love, lank, lean, and poor? Is it the scope, the end of the commandment given unto man, and is it not *God's end?* The scope of all his ways and works, of all his dispensations and administrations? Can he be said to have attained his end, to have reached his mark, and to be at rest, till he hath brought forth, and manifested *love to all;* to all his offspring, the offspring of his own bowels; as the nature of man is said to be? Is it the nature of love to bear all things, to endure all things, and is there any thing that God whose name and nature is love shall not bear, hath hot borne and endured for us, for and from the worst, the chiefest sinner? Is it the nature of love not to seek its own, and shall God who is love seek his own otherwise, than in the good, the salvation, the happiness of his creature? Doth love never fail? shall it survive and over live prophecies, tongues, knowledge? and shall the wrath and severity of God outlive, outlast his love, his grace, his sweetness? Is love greater than faith? than hope? and *is wrath greater than love?* or is wrath that word which God hath magnified *above all his names;* or rather is it any other *than his loving kindness and his truth,* which is all one with love, Psa. cxxxviii. 2, or his mercy, Gen. xix. 19. Which upon this account may be said to rejoice against judgment, Jam. ii. 13. Yea, shall every creature lie down in love, though their former course hath been rapine and cruelty, and shall God alone set *and lie down in wrath* with the greatest part of the work of his hand? If love be his essence, his nature, how can this be? Nature will have its course; *expellas furca licet.*

CHAPTER XVII.

An Argument for this Hypothesis, drawn from the Oath of the Angel, Rev. x. 1--6.

THIS other mighty angel is so stiled, either with relation to the angel employed before in delivering this revelation to John, or in comparison with *all the angels of the trumpets* presented in vision before, and it must needs be *Christ;* because the characters which are given to this angel are given to none but Christ in this prophecy, nor any where else. And most probably 'tis to be understood of Christ's coming in his Father's power of dominion and kingdom, in order to reign with his saints. His characters are these:

1. *Mighty* as a distinguishing epithet, we see no difference put between the angels of ministry in the other parts of this revelation, but here and in chap. xviii. ver. 1, and 21, where therefore Christ is intended.

2. His "coming down from heaven," which signifies his place properly to be in heaven, and this to be a *condescension* which is not observed of the other angels, whose office is to be sent *forth* for the good of the heirs of salvation.

3. His being clothed "with a cloud," which signifies his considering of us, for his *excess of glory;* for though the angels are in excess of glory to us mortals, yet they are not presented to us in that excess, as to *need a cloud,* but only Christ.

4. The "rainbow on his head," which is an

emblem of the *covenant* whereof *he is head*, no angel but Christ hath the rainbow on his head.

5. But this is more, *his face* is as it were the *sun*, this ties this expression to Christ, whose character it properly and only is, Rev. i. 16, where we have him so first described in this prophecy, as leading to the understanding of every particular mentioned as they should occur through the book, and teaching us how to apply them.

6. "His feet as pillars of fire." This also is the same with what is given to Christ, chap. i. 15, and to none else in this prophecy.

7. The open book in his hand was his own singular acquest, chap. v. 7.

8. His posture, *his prevailing posture* on the earth and sea, *the principles and seats of his two grand enemies*, both the beasts; is the same with that Dan. xii. as is the *oath* and the *matter* confirmed thereby, as interpreters do accord.

9. The voice "as of a roaring lion," agrees most properly to him, the lion of the *tribe of Judah*, and is often applied to him by the prophets. And,

10. The seven thunders that utter their voices hereupon, are never mentioned but as proceeding *from him* and from the *throne of God*, which throne is he, *or the temple of God, which he* likewise is, and the seventh angel, which he likewise is, or at the heels of, chap. xi. 19; chap. xvi. 18; chap. iv. 5. Thus much for the person and his description.

The next thing is the contents of the seven thunders, which John is forbid to write, according to the command given to Daniel, chap. xii. ver. 4, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the word and seal the book, even to the time of the end." Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. What these things were, more than the wonders that were to be accomplished, *and the mystery declared to the prophets*, which should be accomplished in its season, and till then, (though men should be getting a little light, time after time, there would not be yet a full understanding until the time of the end) we cannot divine, unless it were the terribleness of those trials that shall usher in this blessed state of rest, which are such, as the creation never knew, as both Daniel and our Saviour say, and therefore shall pass quickly, and so are forbidden to be written, Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.

But the next words which acquaint us with the *action* of the angel that stood upon the sea and the earth, who lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore there *should be time no longer*, acquaints us with a great mystery, viz. that the whole mystery of God, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets, shall be finished at the seventh trumpet, and with the finishing thereof, time itself shall expire and go out.

Here are two things, and here are two expressions of those things.

1. "That time shall be no more." The word used for time is *chronos*, which signifies protraction of time, until such a period, and differs from *kairos*, which signifies the fit juncture for every purpose. The meaning of time shall be no more, is,

1. That there shall be no longer protraction of those things, which God hath declared by the prophets; but that they shall receive their accomplishment: this is the direct meaning, which is the same with what follows, ver. 7. But there are two things more implied therein.

1st. That time is God's *hour-glass*, which he turns up, and measures the space and order in which his purposes are to be brought about; according to that in Ecclesiastes, "there is a time appointed to every purpose under heaven."

2d. With the accomplishment of those purposes under heaven, time itself expires; not that there shall be *no duration* of those purposes or works, after they are accomplished; but that duration shall not be measured *by the sun or moon*. There is duration in eternity, which always was, and will be for ever; but there is no *measure* of the duration of eternity, because things are there perfect *at their full growth*; as the body of man, which was brought forth immediately by the eternity, was at full growth; and so were the trees in *paradise*, and so shall it be at the restitution of all things, when that is absolved and perfected, there shall be no more *growth*, though an *endless variety* and freshness in the joys of the saints.

2. That all the wonders which God hath determined to bring up upon the stage of this world, is the declaring the fulness of his glory, they are all *bounded within time*. It hath been the confident assertion of some, that there is not any thing that the prophets have prophesied of, but it is to receive its accomplishment before Christ delivers up the kingdom to the Father; and I add only this to it, that all that begun with time must end with time. Now all the question will be, whether hell and damnation be included *in the works of time*. 'Tis clear they *begun in time*; for before there was sin, there was no *death*, and before there were wicked spirits, there were *no hell and damnation*. Now before creation there were no wicked men, nor *devils*; nay, all was good by creation. The devils were angels of light, they were not created devils, nor were wicked men created wicked and evil; therefore it is clear, sin and death, hell and damnation, had a beginning, therefore by the same rule they shall have an end.

Obj. It will be said by the same rule, angels and men will have an end, for they are not from eternity.

Answer. Creation puts not things *de novo* into being, but gives them *a new manner of being*. There is an eternal class of all things in God, in *the eternal word*; creation only gives them a *temporary state*. So that it is only a state of men and angels by creation, that is temporary, not the *substratum*, or ground matter of the being of men and angels. Now this temporary state of men and angels, as well as of all things else, shall *end with time*. This temporary state is their subjection or obnoxiousness to *change and corruption*, by which they, with the whole creation were made subjects upon design, as the words import, Rom. viii.

For the subjector, which is God or Christ,

in hope for the creature, chose it not as those words import.

Which affords us a strong reason for the hope and expectation they have of deliverance by the expiration of their bondage; because God serves himself of them, and his glory of their state and condition, and their pain and suffering in it. And having finished and wrought off this piece of glory, having manifested his wrath against sin, having set off his own immutability and eternity, by the fading and corrupt state of all created beings, he will rest *in his end*, and take off this hard law and condition from his creature, and restore the creature to that placid and quiet rest, it had in his bosom before it went forth from thence.

Now having propounded this sense of *time shall be no more*, let us see what evidence and confirmation we can find for it in the text. And,

1. Consider the *oath* that is here taken, and who it is that taketh it. An oath is for *confirmation*, and therefore it is brought in as ratifying the new covenant, Heb. vi. 17, 18, and it is not to be used but in cases of *moment* that require it, as is the case before us; for it is a great matter, and hard to be believed, that all these *grievous* births of time which have continued so long, *should have an end*, therefore the Lord swears it. And let us mark how he is described in the action.

1. The capacity of the person swearing.
2. The name or power by which he swears.

1. The person swearing, is the angel which we have proved to be Christ, by ten particulars in his description: but his capacity and qualification which gives value to his oath, *is his full conquest* and victory over the earth and sea, which immediately refers to the seat and principles of the two beasts. But they may be taken more largely for the principle of all *mutability* and *corruption* which Christ their angel hath under his feet and tramples upon, and can bind and dispose of it at his pleasure, and can say unto it, *appear no more*.

2. The name and power by which he swears, is by him that liveth for ever and ever, viz. the eternity of the Father. This is that name and power that must remove and displace time and all the disorders of it. This is his name, *Jah*. Ps. lxviii. 4: "A Father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow;" a contraction of that name by which he makes known himself to Israel by Moses, when he sent him to deliver them from Egypt, a type of our redemption by Christ. But there is more than this in the text, there is a reason couched for this period, which God will put to time and all the distresses thereof, in these words, which reflect on the creation of heaven, and earth, and sea, and all things therein by him; as who should say, he that made them, may rightfully dispose of them, and knows how to do it, hath power enough, and likewise hath *love enough to his creature*, that will carry him forth to make an end of its misery and suffering, as it is said of the Leviathan, that no man can tame, Job xl. 19: "He that made him can make his sword to approach unto him." God can deal with satan himself, and change him from a devil to an angel of light again, as he can make the wolf, and the lion, and the bear to lay down their fierce and ravenous natures, and will do it in the kingdom of Christ. And then,

Lastly. We have the time set for this great and glorious change, and that is *in the days of the voice of the seventh angel;* when he shall begin to sound, then shall the mystery of God be finished, as he hath declared by his servants the prophets: *not all at once* possibly, but in order; for we are told the trumpet shall sound, that is, probably, it shall continue, as it did at Mount Sinai, and wax louder and louder, till it hath sounded out time and all the disorders of it, and sounded into eternity and its blessed and joyful rest.

Thus we see eternity like the waters of Jordan, standing upon a heap very far from the city Adam for time to enter, and those that came down towards the salt sea failed till time had its course, and then shall these waters of eternity return unto their strength, and overflow all their banks again; which might be allegorically intended in that passage from the name of the city Adam, which is the name of the first man, which city is said to be beside, or by the side of Zoretan, which signifies tribulation, and the waters came down towards the salt sea, which was the sea of Sodom, these failed to give Israel passage. Thus as eternity was, as I may say, suspended to give way to time: *so now time must give way to eternity;* as it is said, the heavens must be rolled up as a scrowl, *and day and night must come to an end*, by which the torments of the beasts' worshippers is measured, Rev. xiv. And so possibly, the punishment of all the ungodly, which is for ever, or everlastingness intended by those expressions, not absolute eternity, but an æviternity. But the matter bound by this oath is yet behind, which is the main of all; and that is, *that the mystery of God shall be finished*, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. What is this mystery of God? the word mystery comes from a word that signifies *shutting*, or *mewing*, or closing up; so that manifestation of God, which hath filled all times hitherto, is a *vailed manifestation*, glorious within, but with a vail upon it, and coarse uncouth covering upon it, as was upon the tabernacle, yea a *disguise*, a parabolical and enigmatical revelation of God. The light of all times, of every dispensation, hath been the drawing back something of this curtain: the lifting up of some part of this vail which is promised to be quite done away in *the mount of Christ's second or heavenly appearance*, and that when we shall see eye to eye, face to face, and that is finishing of this mystery.

There are two things in it. The light shall be perfected. The darkness that was upon it and mixed with it, shall be abolished and done away, for else how is the mystery finished? The finishing of a thing leaves nothing remaining, so that by the seventh trumpet, or before it hath done sounding, the Lord will have made a *perfect revelation of his wrath and justice against sin*, a perfect

discovery of the weakness and vanity of the creature, and will be risen to the *meridian* of the glorious manifestation of himself. The times of this world are as a parenthesis between eternity *a parte ante*, and eternity *a parte post*, replenished with wonders for the illustration of eternity; but these are shut up within two semi-circles, and having served their season, eternity takes its place again; and as the sense is not broken by a parenthesis, which is read over in a breath, so, and not more considerable, is time to eternity.

We read of many signs and wonders in this book of the Revelations, and many mysteries; the mystery of the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks, and the mystery of the woman, even Babylon, and all these signs, these wonders, these mysteries, even the giving scope to the mystery of iniquity, and the revelation of the wicked one, the man of sin, are *all subservient* to the revelation of *Jesus Christ*. And therefore the book takes its denomination from thence, and is called the revelation of Jesus Christ, that being the scope thereof, and when they have served their end, then they lie down and appear no more. And this is the law of all things that are not the eternal glory itself, they lie down into their ideas which are in the eternal glory; but there they are as *beauty spots*, not as *contending images*, but as *eternal witnesses* between God and the creature, between *time* and *eternity*, as slain images, as spoils and trophies of almighty and unchangeable eternity, which will give the Spirit of God exercise and trouble no more, but will cast the creature into the arms and bosom of *its only safety*, and hold it in the firmest and most continual dependance on his keeping, without fear and suspicion of ever being abandoned to change more, and will present everlasting occasion of joy and triumph to the all-conquering power of divine love and glory, that hath prevailed against all this weakness and enmity in the creature, and yet notwithstanding, hath recovered it to his own embraces, and fixed it in the immutability of his own blessedness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Fruits and Advantages of this Hypothesis.

Another Scripture that gives some light to our hypothesis, is in John xvi. 33, where our Saviour tells us he hath overcome the world. If the matter, the manner, the seal and the reason of this victory be rightly opened and understood, it will not only prove Christ's conquest of the world, but contribute also to our present service; for he conquers not as other princes do, to destroy and serve their ambition, but to recover, bring back, and save all that he hath conquered.

1. Then the matter of this victory is the whole world. The world consists of two parts, a light and a dark part, Christ hath conquered both.

1st. The light part of the world, is the first matter of Christ's conquest, God at the beginning set the image of his own beauty in the creation. *This image* at the fall was defaced and set up by man instead of the true beauty, so it became of an *image* an *idol*, of a representation a *rebellion*. Our Lord the true light, the essential, substantial, original *image*, breaks forth upon it, and breaks it in pieces; so in Col. ii. he is said to spoil principalities and powers upon his cross.

Sampson laying hold upon the pillars of the house, pulling down the house upon the Philistines and himself, was a fair type of our dying Saviour; for thus he falling, takes hold of the pillars, principles and powers, the invisible strengths, glories of this world: so he pulls them, the world and his own fleshly part into one common ruin. Christ on the cross uncrowned and uncloathed the light part of the world. The Scripture tells us, that he was the first born of the whole creation, the head of every creature, he was clothed with the supremacy and eminency of all natural strength and glory; but he takes not up his rest here, neither doth apply himself to build up and heighten this natural beauty: but he chooses another title, the first-born from the dead, to crucify the whole creation in himself, as it stood in its natural glory; that he might as the first-born from them, the dead, become the head, the foundation of a new creation.

2d. The dark part of this world. This is the second matter of Christ's conquest and victory, 1 Tim. i. 10, it is said Christ by his appearance hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. I will say no more of this here, because I reserve it for a particular discourse upon that Scripture.

There are two sorts of darkness, the dark things *of earth*, and the dark things of *hell*; both these are in Scripture comprehended under one name of *death*. The Lord Jesus hath taken away both these deaths out of the nature of things in his own person. The whole world in both parts of it, in the light, and in the dark parts, this world in all its tempting and tormenting forms.

2. My second general head is the manner of Christ's conquest. This is four-fold, Christ conquered by resisting, by suffering, by submission, by divine union.

1st. Christ conquered by resisting, our Saviour overcame by fighting, according to the rule, *resist the devil and he will fly from you*.

The devil made two principal onsets upon Christ. The one by the light, the other by the dark part of this world. The first was after his baptism, then the devil came armed with the light part of this world. The beauties of the earth, a temple, in the letter, a representation of divinity, if thou beest the Son of God, &c. He presented and tempted our Saviour at once with all the kingdoms of this world and their glory; but our Saviour resisted and beat him off, "get thee behind me Satan:" immediately upon this all-conquering word, kingdoms, glory, satan, and all vanished into another appearance.

The second onset was at Christ's death: of this our Saviour speaks afore-hand, John xiv. 30, the prince of this world cometh, but he finds nothing in me.

The devil possesseth the principles of nature; by these he conveys himself unto us, and makes us his own. But Jesus Christ was not born in the way of nature, but after a supernatural manner. A divine principle clothed itself with the virgin's substance, grew up in it, made it to subsist in itself, and to be wholly in a divine person; the devil now had nothing of his own in Christ to comply with him, when therefore he came armed with the dark part of the world, having called about him all the black powers of terror and wrath from earth, hell, heaven itself, he meets with a full and strong resistance from Jesus Christ, by which he is beaten down into his depth of darkness below; which he consumed and fired about his head. In this Christ overcame by resisting.

2d. The second manner was by *suffering*.

This world as now it is since the fall, (as it is called in Scripture this present evil world) is compounded of three principles. The guilt of sin. The power of wrath. The frailty of the flesh. These three Christ hath overcome by sufferings.

1. The guilt of sin, 2 Cor. v. and last. Christ is made sin in a flame of wrath in our stead, (or a sacrifice for sin) for us. Christ hath made satisfaction to divine justice: and so taken away the whole guilt of sin in his own person, he is called *Lutron*, a *Ransom*, a balance to the guilt of sin, which makes the scale of justice even again. The sufferings of our Saviour have wonderfully reduced the disorder of sin into order in the eternal judgment of God, as the God-head was clouded by sin in the nature of man: so now it falls in a cloud of vengeance upon the head of all mankind: man aspired by sin to the top of all things; man by sufferings is thrown down below all things to the utmost depths of woe. The image of God was swallowed up into the darkness of sin in man. The image of God now consumes the image of man, comprehends it, magnifies, and makes glorious itself it it, by the suffering of Jesus Christ; thus Christ overcame the guilt of sin by suffering.

2. The power of wrath. The prince of this world reigns by wrath. Christ draws the whole force of wrath upon himself. To spend itself on him the devil now is made a *drone*, having shot his sting into our Saviour and lost it there; thus Christ by death destroys him who had the power of death; Heb. ii. The Psalmist saith, "Deep calls to deep;" the deep of wrath touches upon the deep of love and glory. God is the beginning and end, the top and bottom of all things, as the earth is said to stand in the water, nor as to all his saints that are saved, as the first-fruits being love, so this world stands in a sea of wrath; what mere man soever falls into this sea, can never come to the bottom, but is eternally sinking. Christ more than a many times cast himself into it, immediately reached the utmost depths, and reached through it to the glory below it, discovered the foundations of it all in glory; upon this discovery the sea of wrath disappears for ever in the person of Christ, and is seen no more. He was made a curse for us. He did in death for our sakes and in our stead receive immediately into his own person, into his own breast and heart, the whole curse and wrath.

3. *The frailty of flesh.* Flesh is not sin, but it is the ground, seat, and occasion of sin: it is said the *law* could not give righteousness and life through the weakness of the flesh, Rom. viii. Now we read, 1 Pet. iii. 18, That Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit; so we read it by the Spirit: but in Greek the flesh and spirit do so exactly answer one another, in the connexion and manner of expression, that one would think nothing to be plainer than the intention of the Holy Ghost, to signify that the flesh and the spirit had both the same relation to the person of Christ, in those different states of his dying and rising again; that by his change the spirit came in the place of the flesh, and that the flesh was changed into a spirit as by a natural generation, that, that which was water or air is made fire: the words are these, 1 Pet. iii. 18: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." In the same sense in which he died in flesh or to the flesh, so he rises again in the spirit or to the spirit. That same body which died a fleshly, compounded, mortal substance, rises again a simple, pure, immortal spirit: as a small, solitary, perishing seed dies in the earth, that it may rise again a fair, flourishing, lasting tree; so Jesus Christ crucified the flesh, in its frail and fading form, that he might bring it forth again in a spiritual glory, this is the conquest by suffering.

3d. The third manner is by *submission;* Christ overcame by being overcome, by giving up his will as a captive of love to his Father's will: "Not my will, but thine be done."

It is an approved principle that every thing unchecked in its course, carries tha which it lays hold on, all along with it to its own primitive state. The will of God in its proper and eternal state is love and joy. This will meeting with a yielding subject in Christ, first works him into flesh and blood, then into shames and pains: but it stays no longer 'till it hath wrought him up again into its own highest form of love and joy.

4th. The fourth manner is by a *divine union.* This indeed, if I may so speak, is the sleight and skill by which Christ overcame in the other three stratagems, viz. the divine union. This is two-fold.

1. The bringing down of a divine life to be incarnate, to dwell in flesh; Christ founded this union in his birth, John i. "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us." The original word is, Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, &c. St. John speaks of this union, when he said, he that denies Christ to be come in the flesh, he is *Anti-Christ.*

Q. But how doth this union tend to the conquering of the world?

A. I answer, two ways. 1. By his union the whole world is now transplanted and taken off from its own root, and ingrafted upon a divine principle which possesseth and acts it.

2. This divine principle is a fire in the flesh of Christ, in his worldly person sacrificing and consuming it. "I come," saith Christ, "to send a fire into the world, and what will I, if it be already kindled?" It was already begun in his own flesh, and it is every where such a fire in our flesh, and in all flesh.

Fire with us is a light from the heavenly bodies, secretly conveyed to take hold of dark matter here below, where it contests with the darkness till it consumes it and appears again in its own pure flame of light. Such a fire is the divine life in flesh; it comes not to tarry here, but to kindle us and carry us back with itself: this is the first union.

2. The second union is the bringing up of flesh into the glory of a *divine life;* as Christ founded the former at his *birth*, so he founded this union in his *resurrection*. When Christ was risen, he was still flesh and bones, but he was flesh subdued and heightened to a divine principle: therefore when it pleased it could retreat into the glory of that principle, and become invisible, living after the fashion of an angel. When it pleased it could come forth again in what manner it liked best, and live as men on earth; so it was, as I may humbly speak, a blessed *amphibion*, living both in heaven and earth at pleasure, as some creatures do on the waters, and on dry land. Some believe that at the end of the world, those glorious lights over our heads, shall flame forth with an unwonted force upon all earthly things, and so shall not so much consume as refine them, heightening and uniting them to their own pure beams to subsist together with themselves, and appear from thence after a new manner. Thus the heavenly glory in the person of Christ, breaks forth upon the flesh, glorifies it, gives it a spring and a seat in itself.

It is one great and comprehensive article of our faith, that Jesus Christ the immortal Word, by, in, and for whom all things were created, visible and invisible, hath descended into flesh; by and through his cross, resurrection and ascension, put off flesh, returns to his Father in our nature, which he hath changed from flesh into spirit, making it in soul and body one spirit with God, and yet keeping it in its own propriety, a distinct spirit from him. This same Jesus, as the Lord from heaven, as a quickening spirit, is still descending into the souls of his saints, revealing himself and the Father, there forming himself in them, conforming them to himself, purging them by degrees from all pollution of flesh and spirit, carrying on the fellowship of his death and sufferings, death and resurrection in them, until he completely makes them spirit of his spirit, one spirit with himself and the Father, first in soul, finally at last in body also. Then will be brought forth that adoption of the body of the natural man the apostle speaks of, Rom. viii. 23, *waiting for the adoption*, viz. *the redemption of the body;* he had spoken before of an adoption of the spiritual man, in ver. 15, where he saith, "you have received the spirit of adoption." Jesus Christ and the spiritual man are already both one spirit; we have already received him by our spiritual man, into our earthly part; but it is as light into a candlestick, or liquor into a vessel; the candlestick shines by the light of the candle, but it is still dark in itself; the vessel may contain the taste and savour of the liquor, but is not changed into one substance and nature with it; so the natural man receives some light, some impressions and sweet qualifications from the presence of the spiritual man, but it remains naturally in its own dark and sour principle; but then the divine life and glory shall so shine through the whole natural man, that the natural man itself shall be altogether spiritual. This is the *adoption of the body*, the spiritualizing of it, the bringing it out of the earthly into the heavenly image; and now the natural man shall live together with the spiritual man, in one divine principle, and power, and glory to God the Father. Of both these are the four several manners by which Christ overcame the world.

3. The third part, which comes nearer to our point, is the reason of this conquest; which is not, as I said before, to enslave his conquest, his conquered, like other conquerors, but to restore and bring them back, nor hath he truly conquered them until then. This reason of his conquest is four-fold. The salvation of man. The restoration of the creature. The exaltation of Christ himself. And the manifestation of God to be all in all.

1. The first reason is the salvation of man, Heb. iii. We read, "seeing the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also *took part of the same*," &c. We read in that Scripture also, that the work of Christ was to *bring many sons to glory*. These sons were sent forth into flesh and blood; united with their clods of flesh, they were surprised with the devil, and made prisoners, first to the fear of death, and then to death itself. Jesus Christ over-ran and overcame all these, satan, death, fear, flesh, and blood; so he saved us from them, so he brought the sons of God to glory. As the body must first be cracked and fall in pieces before the soul can be glorified; so must this world fall, before good men can grow to their proper greatness and height. The body, and the world are dark shadows, with which our spirits are overcast. Christ, the true light scattering himself into these shadows, dissolves them, and so we appear together with him in the open sun-shine of glory. This seems to refer only to the elect, but it refers to them as the *first-fruits*, for if he had destroyed him that had the power of death, and all what hath been said before, they are not conquered, if he leaves them at last reigning over any, for they were all *reheaded* in him.

2. The second reason is, *the restoration of the creature*, 1 John iii. 8. It is said Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. The vanity and vexation of the creature are the devil's works. Every creature hath in God a divine principle, a divine appearance. As they came forth from God, they were in paradise, all the creatures conspired into one image of the eternal beauty; each creature was the same image in less, *Deus maximus in minimo;* every single creature was an

image of the great God in a little frame. When sin came, the devil spread a secret poison upon the face of the creation. The whole was now become a confused piece of deformity, and every particular an ill-shaped monster, *cui lumen ademptum*. The light of the divine image being withdrawn, Jesus Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, the unchangeable image of things, bathed the creatures in their blood and in his own, he broke them in pieces, and now casts them up in himself; thus he restores them to their principles, shape, and state. Our Saviour proclaims of himself, "I make all things new." Life hath a depth in it, said a philosopher of old. The life is the only newness and freshness of things. This is still that, which draws forth from its depths a variety and succession of fair appearances, as plants in the spring. This world, as it is now, is a desolate dying thing: our Saviour, who is the first principle, pattern, root, head, and spirit of all things, by his cross kills it outright, that he might put a new spirit and life into it. Thus the apostle brings in, Rom. viii., all the *creatures groaning* for the bringing forth of this state in themselves, which is already brought forth for them in the person of Christ.

3. The third reason is the exaltation of Christ. In Phil. ii., it is said of Christ, that "he became obedient to death." There you have the combat and conquest; the end follows: "Therefore God hath exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord." These are borrowed expressions from the prophet Isaiah, with some change, Isaiah xlv.; that which the apostle interprets here confessing, the prophet there calls swearing.

Q. But what manner of exaltation is this? What name can be above every name? What knee? What tongue? What swearing of things in heaven, or below the earth?

A. I answer, this name is the last and full expression of the first and supreme glory in the person of Christ. The knee is the strength, on which men and beasts sustain their own weight, and raise themselves to their due height. The tongue is that outform, in which every thing puts forth and declares itself. To swear, is to acknowledge the omnipotence, omnipresence, and sovereignty of that by which we swear, together with the subsistence of all things in it; therefore God swears by himself, by his own life. It was a piece of flattery among the heathens to swear by the life, the head, the genius, the fortune of their princes. Joseph had learned somewhat of this in the court, when he swore *by the life of Pharaoh*. St. Paul reckons that which the prophet calls swearing to Jesus, is confessing that Jesus is the Lord; so then Christ was exalted; every knee bows, and kneels, and yields itself captive to Christ; every form and beauty resigns itself to have its appearance only in his beams; all things own him as their strength, light, life, their all.

4. The fourth part is the seat of the victory: this three-fold. The person of Christ. The person of saints as the first-fruits, and the persons of the whole world.

1. The first seat, Eph. i. 10, we read that God hath gathered up all things in heaven and earth into one in himself. Our Saviour hath, as we may see more elsewhere, a comprehensive and representative person. The Lord Jesus hath a comprehensive person; he contains in himself the principles of time and eternity, this world and that which is to come. When he died in our fleshly part and rose again in a spiritual glory, then was time and eternity reconciled in him in their radical principle. The Lord Jesus hath also a representative person; he bears in his person the image of God and man, heaven and earth. When his earthly man was crucified, then was the whole world crucified and changed in picture. This is the first seat of this victory, the person of Christ; all things are, as I said before, *re-headed* in him.

2. The second seat, the person of the *saint*. The victory of Christ enlarges itself from him to every Christian, as Paul expresseth it in his own design and desire, Gal. vi. God forbid I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by which cross of Christ I am crucified to the world, and the world to me. The world is become as a carcase to me, if it hath lost its beauty and sweetness, and I am become as a dead person to the world. Every good man hath in his soul a living picture of Christ, and a small landscape of Mount Calvary. Christ is formed in him through faith, and so is the *cross* of Christ, on which a Christian and the whole world within him is fastened. An universal darkness breaks forth, when Christ suffered, and an oriental light encompasses with a full universal glory, where the world and a Christian are seen again, as new created in a diviner shape. This is the second seat of Christ's victory.

3. The third and last seat is general, the *whole world*, 2 Pet. iii. 7: "The heavens and earth which now are, they are reserved for fire."

Q. What fire is this, or who kindles it?

A. I shall answer, 'tis a sparkle of divine glory which sends forth its objects in the bosom of Jesus Christ, flying through the world, feeding itself upon all worldly things till it appear a clear and universal flame. I come, saith Christ, to send a fire upon the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled: this fire was kindled when Christ was born, and burnt out first upon the green tree, the cross which bears the goodliest fruit that ever the world brought forth.

All things still feel the heat of this fire in plagues, disorders, wars, all sorts of miseries, till at last day is turned all into flame; yet is not this fire so much to ruin, as refine things; therefore when Christ hath reduced this old world to ashes, as the phœnix, out of her ashes he will raise new heavens and new earth. This is a general view of the victory of Christ; and if the victory can be submitted to sin, to death, to hell, and wrath, where shall we find Christ a conquerer? But there is no victory to be submitted to death,

hell, and wrath, and therefore I conclude that all these must submit to the conquest of Christ, or he hath not overcome the whole world.

CHAPTER XIX.

The consideration of God, as Love.

My next scripture shall be, 1 John iv. 16: "God is Love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." From this text opened, we shall find (if God be Love, if all his saints dwell in that love, and they dwell in God, and God dwelleth in them) more than presumptions that this text is not true, neither as to God being love, and dwelling in God, and God in them; that God can leave the greatest part of his offspring to be eternally miserable, or that those that dwell in one love with him, can be happy eternally without them. To form my argument from hence, I will take notice of three things in this scripture.

1. We have a most excellent and a right description of God. *God is Love*, and herein a most deep and rich ground of divine love, which is the God-head itself. The divine essence is the glorious mine, the divine bosom, the blessed mint of all true love; God is the first, and fountain love; there is no true love any where which is not from this first love, which is not this first love itself; for it must be a participation of it. In this love first lies, as in its fountain, and from this love flows all the true love every where else to be found.

2. We have here the blessed character of a saint; he is one that dwelleth in love, in which words we have two distinguishing properties of the true divine love.

1st. The comprehensiveness of this divine love; "He that dwelleth in love", in love absolute, in an unconfined, unlimited and universal love, without respect to this or that, or to any particularizing or limiting circumstance, but in love itself, abstracted from all exception to the expression of that love, a love fixed upon the naked notion of good and lovely.

2d. We have here the constancy of this divine love, "He that dwelleth in love," a dwelling is a constant abode. Love is indeed God's dwelling-place, as well as ours, and in this love, God and all his saints do mutually dwell together, one in another, for so it is said, Zeph. iii. 17, that God rests in his love. All motion in all intellectual agents tends to, and endeth in rest. All the motions, works, and ways of God tend to, and end in love, which is his rest; God in all other appearances and forms of things, is only as the schools speak, *in transitu*, passing through them as a way-faring man till he comes to the full expression of his love, and this is his Mount Sion, his resting-place for ever. Here in the full opening of the mystery of this love, which is himself, he casteth off every disguise, he lays aside every veil; here he is seen naked in the simplicity and brightness of his own beautiful person; and as he is, which the apostle saith he is not yet our present happiness. Here also his saints dwell, seeing God, themselves, and all things in their eternal forms of divine loveliness, with a beatifical vision. Here, I say, his saints dwell and rest in love, till the perfection of that finishing discovery of God's love. This is their heaven upon earth, their bed of rest; a saint in this love is at home, dwells here at his ease, in rest, in perfect liberty, unveiled in the free discovery of himself, in the free exercise and full enjoyment of his own spirit, at the height of all power, pleasure, and glory, as every man dwells in his own house or like a prince in his palace. A saint, according to this scripture, is never at home when he steps out of this love; he then is out of his place, and carried and held preter-naturally. God is love, a saint is a child of God, a child of love; he is known to himself, and to others, to be the divine seed of the divine love, shining in him, and shining forth from him, like the fountain of his love, which reacheth all things: he dwelleth in love; love is his constant abode; love is his orb and sphere, in which he is fixed, in which he dwells, moves, and shines. It is impossible with all gifts, with all powers of miracles, with all the wonderful expressions of a kindness to our fellow-creatures, with an understanding of all mysteries, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xiii. "To patch up a saint without this love."

3. We have the happiness of this person, this saint, and the heavenliness of divine love: "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him." This love then placeth us in heaven; for while we dwell in this love, we dwell in God, which is to dwell in heaven, and more, if it were possible; and it is so, for it is God that makes heaven, and therefore he is more than heaven; and sure I am, heaven without him would be nothing at all.

Love makes a saint a heaven in himself; he that dwelleth in love, hath God dwelling in him. To be the dwelling-place of God then, as was said before, is heaven and more; and he dwelleth in God. This again must be heaven. God and a saint are two loves mutually, dwelling one in the other, essentially, not by a confusion, but by a union of essences.

To make my way for my strength from this scripture to my present argument, I begin with the first: the excellent and the right description of God in these words, *God is Love*.

He who was the disciple of love, who lay in the bosom of love, and so best knew what God is, declares divine love to be the nature and essence of God. God, saith he, is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God.

God is pure love, all love, a God-head of love, as the sea is a heap of waters; "The gathering together of waters he called the sea." Gen. i. As the body of the sun is a pure and simple light, so is God a collection of loves, a gathering together of all loves into one spirit, into this eternal spring, and supreme form; so is God, a sea of love, boundless and bottomless, without shore, bottom, or surface; an infinite ocean of love that can

never run itself dry: so is God a sun, a source of love that can never spend all its light; all the pleasures and joys of love meet in him, are his essence and person, filling all, overflowing all with an infinite fulness and endless variety. He in all the infiniteness of his divine nature, is nothing but love, in its purest, most perfect, most plentiful sweetnesses, with all the richest, the numberless beauties and delights, which love itself, in the infiniteness of its God-head is capable of.

This is the divine nature, a perfect unity, purity, and simplicity of love. This is the sacred unsearchable unity of the divine majesty, the most sacred and supreme love. He is, I say, a perfect unity of love, and so by a necessary consequence, an infinite love for a perfect unity, is positively and perfectly infinite. Unity and infiniteness in truth, signify the same thing; the one by way of affirmation, the other of negation. An entire unity transcendeth all division, all composition, and so all bounds. That which is bounded is made up of different parts, some more inward, as nearer to the centre, and some more outward, remote and extreme, where the whole is bounded. An absolute unity is incapable of being bounded from within or from without, it being simple, pure, unmixed; it is every where itself, and the same equality within itself, equally remote from every thing foreign, from any limit of beginning or end.

I could easily show, how impossible it is for an entire unity to be bounded from any thing within, for then it must be divided into different principles, powers and forms, or parts; some bounded, others bounding, and so also have in itself diversities and dissimilitudes, in its aproximations to, or remoteness from its limits. I might also go on, and show, how an entire unity is incapable of being bounded by any thing without; for an absolute unity comprehendeth all things in the most eminent and transcendent manner within itself; and if there was any thing without this unity, there would then be an agreement between this unity and that foreign being in being, inasmuch as both are; there would be also a deviation and difference between them so far as they are not both one, and one lies without the other, and so in this state there would be of necessity a composition of differing parts in the unity, one part in which it agrees with that without it, and the other in which it differeth from it; and so it were no more an entire unity.

I could run out at large upon this metaphysical notion, to prove the unity of love must be an infinite love; but the age we live in, doth not relish metaphysical learning, and I content myself with the pleasure of it to myself.

In God then is an absolute unity of love; and so if I am right in my reasoning, as I believe I am, he is an absolute, infinite love by its essential form, if I may so speak, every way *one*, one in all things, one with all things, one infinitely above, beyond, and beneath all things, all things in one with an equal propriety, and infinitely more. Thus is God a perfect unity of love, thus is God an infinite love. This most perfect love, with all its infinite, eternal, and all comprehending sweetness, is the only true God.

Our divine apostle speaketh here of love, as the essence of God, and as convertible with God; he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him; that is in plain English, God is love, love is God, God is love itself; the first, the sweetest, the purest, the supreme, the sovereign love, the most absolute, the most incomprehensible, the all comprehending love, love itself, the essence and substance of love; love is God himself, the essence of God, convertible with God; for so this scripture speaks of God and of love, as convertible terms; because we know nothing, as hath been well observed, which so faithfully, so fully, so formally, essentially expresseth the God-head, the divine nature, the divine persons in their distinctions, in their unity, as this name of love. Love is the highest discovery of God to our capacity, as he is in the simplicity of his divine essence. Love is more than an attribute, it is the very name of God, it is God himself. An attribute is an imperfect and a partial expression of God to us; but love is the full expression of him, so far as God can be expressed and conceived by us. Love is the highest, the most exalted name of God; that which the scripture calls his glory, as he is unveiled, unclouded. Love is the universal perfection of the Deity, that perfection of God from which, as I may so speak, all his other perfections are derived, and to which they are all subservient, all the strengths, the sweetnesses, the purities, the powers, the beauties of the divine nature, of the divine persons, they are all concluded and concentred in this love; they are no other than this love itself in so many divine forms, figures, and shapes of beauty and blessedness, acting those heavenly parts which make all the joys and glories of love complete in themselves, and in us. God is love, and therefore all his attributes are the attributes of his love. The full number of all the attributes, excellencies, and perfections of the God-head, like the stars in heaven, no one wanting in their full glory, like the sun in its strength, never waxing dim, waning, never in any eclipse or any cloud, never rising nor setting; they are all united and centred in this love, they are all so many several names, expressions, glories, victories, and triumphs of this love, which is himself; or if you will, this love is the predominant attribute that set all the rest on work; it is the triumphant attribute, and the especial matter of God's glory. For although the divine attributes are equal as they are in God; for one infinite cannot exceed another; yet love is represented to us, with particular advantages above the rest. It is God's dear attribute, as I may so speak, and all his other attributes and perfections are the dear goings-forth of this love. I have more to say upon this matter, to show particularly how all the attributes, excellencies, and perfections of God are love in various forms and shapes, but of that hereafter; only before I proceed to the full opening of this, I would conclude by way of anticipation of myself, with two cautions.

1. While we speak of God as love, let us

take heed that we bring no strange fire to this golden altar, that we form not to ourselves an image of any human or angelical loves: but let us raise our spirits upon the wings of the chaste and heavenly dove, to a love within the innermost veil, within the wings of the golden cherubims; to a love pure and agreeable to the purity, the majesty of the divine nature, infinitely transcending the purest, the most glorious flame of the seraphims themselves. They say, there are some mountains in this world so high, and the air that blows upon them is so pure, that a man cannot live there for the purity of it. Sure I am nothing that is unclean can enter into the high and holy place of this love; nothing that defileth can enter into this love; no filthy thing can lie in the spiritual and chaste embraces of this love; nor can this love suffer any such thing to remain in us, and sure I am it will cease to be this love, if it doth not recover us out of all filth into itself. There is nothing so pure as this love in God and in us; therefore the apostle, 1 Tim. i. 5, puts these two together, "Love and a pure heart." Choice plants, we observe, grow and prosper only in their native soil; if they be transplanted into a different ground, they degenerate and come to nothing; assuredly the love of God will live and flourish no where but in a pure heart, in a new and divine nature: if our spirits be impure, unclean, let us use what diligence we can to heighten and cherish the love of God in us, by the richest notions, the sweetest entertainments of it in the most frequent, the most evangelical duties. This divine plant of spiritual love, will in the midst of all these lose its beauty, sweetness, and virtue, and by degrees die away, if the God of love did not revive it.

There is nothing so strict, so exact, so searching, so severe, as this love; nothing can escape this Lover's eye and indignation, that is contrary to it; it finds out every look, every glance, every motion of our spirit that is unchaste to it. Sin and divine love cannot lodge quietly together, cannot divide or share out between them two dominions in one soul; sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace, viz., love; for grace is the highest, the sweetest, the most exalted name of love. Divine love will not suffer any other interest to grow up by it, it will be absolute wherever it comes: so is all love here below, though never so fond, it is still either a sovereign or a tyrant.

There is, I say, nothing so severe, so searching as love: it is compared in scripture to fire; so the baptism of the holy ghost, the spirit of the gospel, the spirit of grace and love, the spirit whose name is love (as the name of the second person in the trinity, is wisdom, or the word) is called a baptism with fire. Divine love wherever it comes is a refiner's fire, separating every where between darkness and light, between good and evil, gold and dross, things that differ; burning up the dross and bringing forth the pure gold to shine more beautifully; transforming every thing into one glorious, heavenly, immortal nature with itself; melting and uniting the gold until it all run into one undivided mass.

Thus again, the love of the heavenly bridegroom, Cant. viii. 6, is thus described: "Love is strong as death, jealousy is hard, cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are the coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame." It is in the Hebrew, coals of the flame of the Lord, of a divine flame. There are two expressions here which do very emphatically set forth the searching and severe nature of love.

1. Jealousy, which may rather be interpreted the zeal of love, is said here to be as the coals of fire, the coals of a vehement flame, of the flame of *Jah*; it is wherever it comes as the fire of God, a divine fire burning up every thing that is heterogeneal; it is to every thing that is contrary to it, like fire, dreadful, irresistible, devouring, tormenting, till it hath quite consumed the whole body of death, till it hath consumed the whole frame of his creation in us, separating us from every form of things, and transforming us into its own shining and flourishing form. The divine and heavenly person of our Jesus, the primitive and purest love and loveliness.

2. Jealousy (which as I said before may rather be interpreted the zeal of love) is said here to be as strong as death, hard and cruel as the grave. Divine love, the zeal of divine love, both in God and in us, is strong as death, hard and cruel as the grave. The meaning, I conceive, is this: death is hard, inexorable, irresistible; it devours, it feeds upon it, eateth up without any mercy, all things earthly, fleshly, mortal, mixt, until it hath consumed the earthly, the fleshly, the mortal part, and changed all into a pure, heavenly, spiritual, immortal glory, dissolving and resolving all mixtures into the ever blessed and unchangeable unity.

Thus divine love is a divine death, hard as death, cruel as the grave, inexorable, irresistible, never yielding to any thing corrupt, carnal, and earthly; never to be subjected to anything impure, never to be wrought to a compliance with any thing that must die, to cherish that or to lie down in the bosom of it, this is the treachery and adultery of unclean lust, not the truth and purity of heavenly love.

Divine love is like a leaven which overspreads, subdues, and ferments the whole mass in which it is wrapt up; however that rule, touch not, taste not, handle not, be abolished as to symbolical rites, yet it hath in it an immutable mystery in this love. Divine love can be no more reconciled to sin, than day and night, light and darkness, life and death, can intermingle or comply one with another. To think to live in the love of God and in sin, is to endeavour to reconcile heaven and hell, and to accommodate matters between God and the devil as such. Love is the seed of God, sin is the seed of the serpent, that seed which is the very spirit of hell and of all devils; this which makes hell to be hell, and the devils there to be devils. There is a perpetual enmity between these two seeds; there can be no peace, no not so much as a truce, a cessation of arms between them; one must conquer, kill, and destroy the other. There are not two things in all the world more irreconcilable and inconsistent than divine

love and sin. This love is hard as death, cruel as the grave. O the sweet, the heavenly mystery of divine love, and of death! O the divinity, the divine depth of love and of death! They are both one and the same divine mystery, one and the same way, to one and the same blessed end; death is in truth, the divine love in the form of death. The supremely sweet, the supremely glorious flame of the highest unity, descending in a cloud, drawing all things to itself within that cloud. Thus at once feasting itself upon them, and making itself a feast to them, so feasting together with them; while by its blessed burnings upon them, it converteth them into one flame, one spirit of glory and majesty with itself. This cloud too, in which this supreme unity, this supreme love descendeth, which we call death, is a knot, a chariot of angels, which are indeed a cloud to the natural senses, that is, to the disappearing darkness, but to the spiritual senses, to the springing light, angels, seraphims, angels of love, divine ministers of divine love, shining and singing as they descend and ascend; this is the mystery, the divine mystery of death; this is the mystery of divine love in the form of death; this death is a divine love; thus love is a death to every thing that should die. O how kind is the cruelty of this death! O how faithfully cruel is the kindness of this killing love!

2. My second caution (having so fully vindicated the purity of this love) shall be to take heed how we set any bounds to this infinite love; how we hint that love which is God, that love, that God who is love; a love which hath a depth in it, that swallows up the capacious spirits of men, saints and angels, but can be fathomed by none of them; but only by that spirit which searcheth all things, even the deep things of God.

This incomprehensible love is made up of breadths, and lengths, and depths, and heights, which pass all understanding. Here is a depth without any bottom, a height without any bound, a breadth, a length without any measure. This is a love which stretcheth forth itself beneath, above, through, and beyond all things; a love which at once extends and exceeds all understandings and capacities; a love which hath in it all the fulness of the God-head, an inexhaustible spring, fountain, ocean of love and goodness without beginning or end, without bottom or bound; a love in which, as has been said, where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more superabound. O tell me where is this superabounding grace; and how is this text true, if it leave sin and death reigning and triumphing over the greatest part of mankind? If the evil that abound in the creatures can exceed the love and goodness in God, shall infinite and eternal love fail; shall the sovereignty and wrath of God out-live his love, his grace, his sweetness? Is this wrath greater and stronger than his love? Is it not a servant to it? Do not all his attributes serve his love? Can there be any supreme evil? And can God cease to be God? which he must do when he ceaseth to be good. Let us then take heed we set no bounds to that which is unbounded. How we dare to say to this ocean of love, thus far shalt thou go and no further.

CHAPTER XX.

Shewing that Love is the Universal Perfection of The Deity.

I have already shown that love is the root, the original, the measure, the flower, the sum and substance of all perfections whatever, moral or evangelical, human or divine; that there are no moral perfections we are acquainted with, and have any notion of in ourselves or any where else, but what flow from and are contained in love. I now show that all the perfections of God, all the moral or divine perfections of God are by way of eminence and transcendency comprehended in this love.

There are some perfections in God we best understand, by a participation of and acquaintance with them in ourselves, by a transcript and copy of them in our minds; there are other perfections in God which it is impossible for us to communicate with him, because they are inconsistent with the very notion of a creature, and are peculiar to the Deity, but yet being revealed to us concerning God, we are sure of them because they are conformable to the most perfect ideas we can frame of him; but all still are only so far moral and divine perfections as they spring from, and tend to love. We can conceive of no moral excellencies either in God or in ourselves, but so far as they do partake of and are subservient to this love. I shall give you several instances of the perfections of God to make this good, and I shall begin with those which we would think in their own nature to be most remote from love, no way allied, but contrary to it.

The first instance shall be the *justice* of God. Justice which gives to every one his right and due, this is only so far commendable as it flows from love and communicates with goodness, for otherwise, as we say, *summum jus* is *summa injuria, too strict justice bears upon cruelty:* it is no perfection to exact, to be too strict and severe, whereas if it were in its own nature and physically good, and not *gratia alterius*, for the sake of something else, it would be universally and so intensely and extensely so; for that which is good in itself, the more there is of it still the better; so that justice which we think in its own nature to be most remote from love, no way allied but contrary to it, yet this justice is only so far a moral perfection, is only so far commendable as it flows from love and communicates with goodness.

There are two sorts of justice, *remunerative* and *vindictive* or punitive justice; of the first, I need say nothing to prove it; it is one with love and goodness, for the thing speaks itself.

Vindictive or punitive is either to satisfy a peevish humour which pleases itself in the misery of those by whom it is offended, and there is a spirit of revenge and cruelty in it, equally, absolutely evil and abhorrent from the nature of God and all good men; for how-

soever some men have painted God in their own minds, and represented him to the world as a cruel being, as one extending himself to a larger capacity in severity and wrath, than sweetnesses and loves; as an enemy to, and a neglecter of the joys and felicities of his creatures; as one that waiteth for their haltings, and hath rather a pleasure and delight to himself in the shame and ruin of his own works. This is but a false image, an idol which guilty, angry, peevish man hath set up within itself in the place of God. Or further,

If we consider well the several grounds of vindictive and punitive justice. It is either for the good and correction of the person that is punished, or for the example and preservation of others, or to repair the honour and to secure the right of the party offended; or, for the safety of the community in which, and against which, the crime is committed; or it is to restore and to maintain *the authority of the law*, which is the good, the safety, the welfare of all those that live under it, and which is vilified and weakened by every wilful breach of it to the danger of the whole. Now, the end of the law being the good, the safety, the welfare of all those that live under it, it is plain it must be the end of the punishment also. Now it is plain, that in all these cases, love and goodness is the principle that bestows upon justice whatever it hath of perfection, and that the end of the punishment must be the end of the law; which is the *good of the whole*, or else it is to show that due hatred of, and displeasure against sin, which is in God, and which also ought to be in us; but this is by no means to be accompanied with any ill will to the sinner, but to discountenance and destroy the sin, and so love and goodness is still the root and fruit of it, the bottom and top of it. A right and true hatred of evil every where springs from a love of the person; wrath and hatred against sin, is no bitter zeal against the sinner, but a due indignation of love and goodness against the sin. The destruction of sin and propagation of the divine image, is still the principal intention where the indignation is right. The subject suffers only as it is in conjunction with that which is ruinous to itself and one another, and which God and all good men must hate or cease to be themselves. For the proper place which sin hath in the universal harmony of things, is to be the object of a divine hatred. The mark and butt, against which God shoots his burning arrows, and at which he casts his fiery darts.

Or it is for *vindication* of that righteousness, rectitude and purity that is abused and wronged by sin; and so the end of it is either to stir up in the sinner, or to increase in others an high esteem, reverence and love of those perfections; and so goodness is still its rise and fountain, and its stream. Or,

Lastly, it is, as one saith, because sin and punishment are terms which do very well agree one with another, and that sin being the worst thing in the world, it is very meet it should fare accordingly, and this is no more than the natural course of things. That as every principle naturally unfolds itself into all the powers and forms contained in it; so the evil of sin which is the root of all evil should spring up into all manner of evils, of blame, shame, pain, sorrow, and torment, which do all lie wrapt up in it; all this is no more than the sensible *connexion*, the inviolable order that must be between the evil of sin, and the evil of suffering, and this is nothing but a branch of that divine wisdom, goodness, impartial and unbiased providence which takes care of the whole.

Thus whether we consider the several kinds and sorts of justice, and the several reasons and grounds of punitive justice, it is most evident that justice, both in God and in us, is nothing else but love and goodness in another name and dress; is nothing else but the order and harmony of the divine love and goodness. From all the notions of justice before-mentioned, it is impossible to draw an argument for eternal punitive justice; for that can be neither for the correction of the person that is punished, or for the preservation of others, or to repair the honour and to secure the right of the God offended, whose glory is above all; or for the maintaining of the authority of the law, which is the safety and welfare of those that live under it, and which is vilified and weakened by every wilful breach of it. For the law is perfectly fulfilled and abrogated; sure I am, therefore, that every thing, even justice itself, must end where it begins. Justice riseth up from love, is governed by it, and resolves it into itself.

As for vindictive and punitive justice, when it is not for the reason before-mentioned or such like; but to satisfy, as hath been said, a peevish proud humour which pleaseth itself in the misery of those by whom it is offended, it loseth the nature and name of justice, and is of a spirit of *revenge* and *cruelty*, as hath been already said, and in its quality absolutely *evil*, and abhorrent from the nature of God and good men. Sure I am, for a judge here below, to condemn the greatest malefactor and murderer with pleasure, and delight in the ruin and destruction of his fellow-creature, is to make himself guilty of the same offence, the same murder for which he condemns another to punishment, for punishment sake; for this is the *lust* of the punisher, and cannot be the qualification of any good being. The true notion of justice, the proper scope and design of it is not punishment; but the prevention of those evils which are hurtful to ourselves and others. The vengeance that is taken on wicked men is not the design of justice, but the necessary consequences of it. This is the meaning of all divine laws, of all good laws whatsoever; a security of right and equity. This is the meaning of all the punishment annexed to the breach of those laws to prevent transgression; so that it is the maintenance of that justice and right which governs these matters which is the common good: for justice is a thing, not of a private and personal, but a public and common nature. All is to be preferred before any part whatsoever. God, and no good man punishes any out of a delight in punishment, or in the sufferings of the punished; but all right punishment is either as physic for the recovery of the patient, or for the good of the whole; as a man consents

to have a member of his own body cut off to preserve the rest, *ne pars sincera trahatur*, so that the source and fountain of all punishment is love and goodness.

It is plain, from all this, that the attribute of justice doth not at all clash with that of goodness, it being indeed but a branch or particular modification of it. That justice is an eternal branch of that perfect love and goodness which is the measure of all things: which is the source, the life, the soul of all morality, virtue and excellency whatsoever: that love and goodness bestows upon justice, whatsoever it hath of a moral perfection and excellency. Suppose now all these cases, for the recovery of the person, the example to others, &c. There is no room for eternal punishment upon these accounts. Take in all the other arguments for the vindicating the honour of God and his law, there is no pretence yet for eternal punishments; because nothing more runs upon the honour of God than such a notion; and if God saves any one in the world with a *salvo* to his justice, his justice is secured if he goes on and saves all.

Another instance is the *holiness* of God. What is it but his loveliness and love? It is called in Scripture the *beauties of holiness*; and it is so called with a peculiar respect to God's mercy, which is one of the sweetest, tenderest, largest, and most condescending names of his love. So in 2 Chron. xx. 21, it is said Jehosophat appointed singers unto the Lord, that should praise the beauties of holiness, and to say, "Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever." We are too apt to place the beauty of our holiness in a severe and rigid and scornful carriage towards poor sinners; but holiness in God is a spring of all sweetness, tenderness, compassion and bowels towards the worst, the greatest of sinners, to the vilest and most loathsome, and lost. God pronounceth one of his sweetest promises to poor undone sinners, in the greatest pomp and majesty of his holiness, Isaiah lvii. 15: "Thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." It is because we are no more holy, that we understand not this; that where there is most holiness there is most meekness, pity, compassion, and condescension to poor sinners. 'Tis a singular expression of God to this purpose; Hosea xi. 9: "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger: I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man, the holy one in the midst of thee, and I will not enter into the city." "Such an High-Priest," saith the apostle, Heb. vii. 26, "became us, was necessary for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." He was without sin, and the greatest friend to publicans and sinners, and for that very reason, because he was *without sin*. One great reason why we have no more bowels for sinners, why we are so full of bitterness, is, because we have no more true holiness, 1 Tim. ii. 8. The apostle so puts these two together, "lifting up holy hands without wrath;" as if holiness and wrath were two things that were inconsistent. And again, the Scripture at once calls God the *Holy one of Israel*, and the *Saviour* thereof. Sure I am, true holiness doth not express itself in a sourness of temper and behaviour towards others, but in the greatest sweetness, kindness, and goodwill to them.

We are thus instructed, Gal. vi. 1: "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness." It is a phrase borrowed from chirurgeons, who when they set a broken bone, handle it with all possible tenderness. We are apt to think ourselves more holy than others, when we insult over, and are severe against a poor fallen brother. But where there is most spirituality there is most tenderness too, and the greatest sympathy with fallen ones. And herein we greatly provide for our own standing, as the apostle saith in the following words concerning ourselves, *lest we also be tempted*. It is an observation of mine that God hath *signanter*, signally left persons to *fall themselves*, because they have miscarried in this point. Sure I am, holiness in God is his beauty, his sweetness, his goodness, his love, and therefore this is still brought in as the burthen of all our songs of praise to him, who is glorious in holiness; this is the ground, the reason of all our salvations, and should be the crown, the glory, the end of them all.

Another instance is the *faithfulness* of God; if we do but consider what it is, we must confess it owes its moral perfection to love and goodness. Faithfulness, as hath been already said, is a *conformity* of the declarations of *purposes* and intents, to their issues and *performances*. And is not this accounted a perfection according to the diversity of the subject, about which it is conversant? If a promise be made in absolute terms, and afterwards the performance be suspended on a condition not expressed, we all account it a breach of candor and ingenuity, and complain of it as an abuse and collusion; but if a threatening be pronounced with the same absoluteness that upon the commission of such a fault, such a punishment should certainly follow; yet if upon repentance and submission, or intervening deploration of the offender, or intercession of the Mediator in his behalf, the offender be remitted, do we not applaud it as an act of grace and clemency? So that it is most evident that it is only the partaking or not partaking of goodness that makes these acts undergo divers censures. We should challenge the faithfulness of God and man, when a good promised is not performed; but we complain not of the want of faithfulness, when the evil threatened is not accomplished; we are angry with no man that is not so bad as his word. We do not think it an imperfection, but a perfection of God that he repents him of the evil. Indeed the prophet Jonah in a peevish and malecontent humour, and preferring his own reputation to the honour and glory of God, was displeased and very angry with God, because he did not destroy Nineveh; and yet in the midst of his anger gives this reason why he fled from the command of God, to proclaim the destruction of that great city: "I know," saith he,

"that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth thee of the evil." No person ever yet charged God with unfaithfulness to his word and command, because he did not destroy Nineveh.

We may instance again in the *wisdom* and *power* of God; separate these from love and goodness, and they are, as a great man saith, but subtle, cunning, and crafty mischief, and armed wickedness, and brutish force. Let us imagine a being, saith he, of infinite subtlety and cunning, that can conceive ways and means for carrying on any design; and let this being have all power to bring to pass whatsoever it projects, and let it be, as to its subsistence, immutable and immense, yet if you add to this being principles of envy, malice, and cruelty, it would be so far from deserving the name of God, that it would be a worse devil than hell itself can show; for the prince of devils there, with all his cunning and malice, is subordinate, he can bring nothing to pass without the permission, the commission, and authority of the Supreme Being. Sure I am, there is nothing we should be more careful of, and more afraid to do, than to set up a wisdom, a power, a holiness, a greatness in God, without love and goodness, as its ground, its root, its essence, its design, its fruit, its image, and its end. Give me leave to enlarge a little more upon these two instances, the wisdom and the power of God; and in the first place, to do that right to the wisdom of God as to assert it is all love. The unfathomable depths of the divine wisdom, what are they but the contrivances, the plots, the mysteries, the designs, the methods, the conducts and discipline of his love! as the apostle speaks, Eph. i. that God in the riches of his grace hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.

The divine wisdom is a manifold and deep channel, which the full spring of eternal love maketh to itself, by the force of which it easily streams through all things in various courses and forms, until they meet again in the sea of love, in the bosom of God. Divine wisdom is the riches of divine love, spreading itself into an infinite variety, through innumerable changes and windings, and brings forth itself all along, and fully in the close into a most ravishing harmony of all divine beauties and joys. Divine wisdom is love itself, forming itself into rich designs, most beautiful contrivances, full of unexpected and surprising turns, full of depths, past the searches of every created eye, that in the close it may display its blessed treasures more fully, and that it may sooner or later raise and enlarge every spirit to take in its joys. Thus, as was said before, the riches of grace hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and in all prudence.

The divine wisdom in all its works within and without, is no other than a deep, delightful, God-like conveyance of love, on which the whole God-head lays itself out, to the utmost of all its bounded fulness and treasures, for this love to bring forth and express itself with all possible advantage, with all beautifyings, sweetenings, and heightenings; as in the whole contrivance, so in each part and point of it, through all which this love by this wisdom conducted itself with an unexpressible force and sweetness.

The wisdom of God is, as an excellent person calls it, the divine art of love, the divine prudence; and prudence is the net of this love to catch hearts in, spread through the sea of this creation. O how blessed are they that are caught in this net, by this *fisher of souls*, the divine love and wisdom!

The wisdom of God, which is a pure act of highest and most universal harmony, is the *music* of divine love, by which it charmeth souls, and attracts them to itself. Who would not submit to all the methods of this wisdom, which is love, though he doth not comprehend its ways? I would further say from the *power* of God; his *power, omnipotency*, with his liberty to do whatever he pleaseth, is nothing else but the *strength of his love*; the almightiness of his goodness, which being stronger than evil, can never be overcome nor interrupted by it; but powerfully reaches all things, and sweetly, first or last, subdues them to himself, irresistibly imparting itself to them, according to those several degrees in which they are capable of it. God is an infinite, a perfect *power, hole dunamis*, as one calls him, a whole *entire power*; such hath no allay, no mixture of impotency, nor any defect of power mingled with it; but still the *moral* perfection of his power, is his *love* and *goodness*. God cannot with all his power do any thing that is evil; his power is still guided, governed and exerted by his will; "he worketh all things after the council of his own will;" and his will is *love* itself, goodness itself, the first, the supreme, the essential goodness, the unsearchable treasure of all sweetnesses and joys. His power and his goodness then are inseparable, are one in all; in those mighty acts in which he displays the one, he also discovers the other. All the acts of his power are indeed but so many various expressions of his love and goodness. It is not power to be able to do one's self a mischief; the *root* of all power is goodness; the *terms* of all power are the same goodness. All true power begins and ends in goodness; power without goodness is a monster. He doth a child no unkindness who takes from it a knife or any thing mischievous to it. He doth a madman no injury, that holds his hands and binds him, and so hinders him from wronging himself. It is no expression of health and strength, but the heighth of a distemper and weakness, for a man to overpower all that are about him, and to offer violence to himself and them. 'Tis a rule, *posse malum est non posse, power to evil is imbecility*: it is not properly power, but impotency. Power and liberty to sin is a contradiction in the very terms; it is as if one should say *power to weakness*, power to nothing, or to that which is worse than nothing, or *liberty to slavery*; for goodness is essential and intrinsical to power and liberty. All power and liberty is comprehended in the nature of good alone; for what is power and liberty, but an exaltation and enlargement of being. And being and goodness are but one: and therefore there is nothing so inconsistent with true power, liberty, and freedom, as evil; which is in its very formality a deficiency, a fault, a nothing,

a privation of being. Whatsoever we promise to ourselves to find in ways of sin, there is nothing but impotency, weakness, narrowness, straitness, confinement, and slavery in all sin. There is only true power, liberty and enlargement, and satisfaction in good. We may think sin an act of power and freedom; but it is indeed weakness, servitude, bondage, and slavery; for God who is the mightiest, the truest agent, cannot sin. We may think it an act of strength, courage, resolution, valour and bravery; but it is the greatest piece of impotency, weakness, cowardice, and baseness in the world; for God who is omnipotent cannot do it. It is like the paralytic motion, it pretends to nimbleness and agility, but it is only want of strength. The head shakes as if it were troubled with over many spirits, but we know it proceeds from weakness, and a loosening of the powers of nature; such a weak, crazy, sickly thing is sin. Whatsoever this deluded world fancies towards evil, it is *impotent*; for man's greatest power and perfection, before the fall, was, that he did not know evil; he was biased and inclined to good, and his experience of evil, which we fondly call his liberty to evil, is now his weakness, slavery, and misery.

There are many positive atributes of God, which are his honour, as to be omniscient, omnipotent, eternal and the like; and so the negation of power in God to do amiss, is his perfection too; this is God's honour, that he cannot sin, he cannot lie, he cannot do any wrong; he that hath all power, and can do all things, cannot do amiss; he that can do what he will, cannot will what he should not do. All evil is a deficiency, a tendency to annihilation, and power cannot produce weakness. The act of omnipotency cannot terminate to nothing; this is God's perfection, God's liberty, that he is a being absolutely and necessarily good; his power, his freedom, and perfection, consists in being able to will only that which is good, just and holy, and in having absolute power to do what he will. Men and angels, in their first creation, had an image of his power, freedom, and blessedness; and this did consist in a power of willing only such things as were good and pleasing to God, and in a power of entertaining all those inferior motions, according to the rectitude of this divine will and image: but this power, in respect of willing what they should, and doing what they would, was mutable, and in that it was, so this power and liberty fell short.

If we go on further, and take a view of the almighty power of God throughout, we shall find it still to be love and goodness. Let us view his almighty power in the works of creation; we see that it was an ocean of love and goodness which delights to overflow its banks, to diffuse and communicate itself, that moved him to bring the wrold into being, and to make so many subjects capable of itself; for it was impossible for him to reap any benefit from any, or all his creatures, men and angels, because nothing can be added to his perfection, *amor divinus rerum omnium est principium*, as a great philosopher speaks; it was then to communicate his goodness, and by that communication to take up his creation into a participation of his own happiness, that he made the whole world.

Take a view again of his almighty power in the works of preservation and providence, which are continued acts of creation, and you will find all here to be a constant emanation of the same love and goodness, to be from the beginning to the end, an emanation of that love and goodness; which is but a natural and genuine notion of God, that he should exert the same goodness to beings which that goodness produced. Although as a great man saith, it seems becoming the simplicity and majesty of God, that he should be alone with himself, retired into the not approachable recesses of his own being, yet through the infinite desire of communicating and diffusing his own love and goodness, he, as it were, lays aside state, and goes forth of himself, and by his tender care and providence, is intimately present with the lowest projection of being. The same love and goodness is that tender mother that brought forth and bears up all things, that holds and enfolds the whole creation continually in the tender bosom of its loving embraces. Thus it is said, he fills all in all, and comprehends all in himself. If you view his whole providence with an unveiled eye, you will find it all a rich contexture of the tenderest love; eternal love to be as the soul of it, the spring, the life, the beauty, the sweetness residing in the whole work of providence, and resting entirely on each motion of it. Take a view of all his power in the work of redemption, which a great man calls *ultimus divini amoris conatus, the last effort of God's love*; and here you have throughout the exceeding greatness of his power in the highest expression of his love and goodness. Thus the gospel, which is a discovery and communication of the highest grace and goodness, is called the *power of God to salvation*.

CHAPTER XXI.

Shewing that the Will of God is Love.

This is an universal truth, that in every spirit love and will are one. This appears, saith an excellent person, in their nature, their object, and their operation. 1. The nature of the *will* and *love* are one: The *will* is declined to be the inclination *of the intellectual spirit, as it tendeth and bendeth itself to this or that*, this way or that way, love is styled the *weight of the soul*; as heavy things by their *weight*, so souls by their love, are carried to their proper centre.

2. The *object* of the will and love is the same. It is a rule, that the power and habits on spirits are divided by their *objects*. Every principle and faculty is the object in its *seed*; the object is the form and perfection of the principle; the *object* of the will is *goodness* real or appearing. The will is never moved but by some reality or appearance of good. And what is the object of love but loveliness? Now loveliness and goodness both consist in *suitableness*, which hath its ground in *unity*. If there be any difference between goodness

and loveliness, it is this: that as the flower of light is the sunshine, and as *Jesus Christ* is the effulgency, the shine of the God-head, the brightness of the glory of God; so loveliness or beauty is goodness *shining out* to attract all hearts to it. Thus *loveliness*, the object of *love* and *goodness*, real or appearing, the object of the will, agree entirely in one.

3. All the *operations* of the will and love are the same. The affections and passions are the motions of the will; all these are loves, summer and winter. Love in the seed is desire, love in the ripe fruit is joy; for grief and hatred are love in its opposition to its *enemy*, which is *enmity* alone—love flowing from or contending with that which stands in its way to, or would rob it of its beloved object. This, saith he, is the general notion concerning the will and love, and he goes on and shows, in particular, how the divine will and love must more transcendently appear to be the same.

The will of God, saith he, is divided by divines into the *revealed* and *secret* will of God. The one is the divine will in outward signs only, the other is the good pleasure in his heart and in eternity. He goes on, and proves the revealed will of God to be love, with that scripture which was my first text to prove my hypothesis. * 1 Tim. ii, 5. And that the secret will of God is love too, he proves from those words: "Fury (saith God) is not in me: But who would set the briars and thorns in battle array against me, I will go through them, I would consume them." Wrath, saith he, is not properly *in God*, it is *without him*; it is only as a cloud upon the sun. The heart of God is love; wrath is but as the work of his hands, and that is his *strange work*, like nothing within, a disguise only. The face of God, and the proper light of it is love; wrath is a vizard, a mist before his face, and no more. God's fury is love, by the opposition heightened to a flame, to consume all vanity and enmity, that settleth itself before it or against it. Thus he excellently writes in his † *rise, reign* and *royalty* of the kingdom of God in the soul of man. And I repeat his own words, because I cannot mend them, and because every one hath not the book, and because I delight upon all occasions to make him yet speak though he be dead. And he concludes, "O that I had a voice powerful enough to reach all the souls wandering through this whole creation, and to call them together to take this cup of salvation into the hand of their faith, to set it to the mouth of their faith and drink deeply of it! as the wine of this cup goes down into their spirits, they will find it to go down right. How sweetly, and how fully will it touch, satisfy, and fill every faculty, every desire, every seed of life with its proper food. The cup of salvation (saith he) which I hold forth to all, is this divine truth, the sum of the gospel preached by angels in their song, at the birth of our *Jesus: The will of God is love.*

"Hear this (saith he) and believe it, O ye souls! the inclination of God, the supreme spirit, and fountain of spirits is to you; the tendency and bent of the divine nature, is to make your joys full by the possession of all good in itself, and to fulfil his own joys in you. For the will is the inclination of every spirit, and the will of God is love. The will of God, in the freedom, absoluteness, infiniteness of it is love.

"*Now I live*, saith *St. Paul, if ye stand fast in the faith*, 1 Thess. iii. 8. (he further observes.) St. Paul speaks not this in his own spirit, but in the spirit of God. God in his own spirit then speaketh it with greater force and fuller sense to every one of you. If you believe me, and take in my love, which is my life. Now I have a new love, a new life, a new joy, and Heaven *in you*. If you stand fast in it, my joy and glory is as firm in your hearts as in heaven itself.

"If we will believe (he concludes) all the declarations of God from heaven: the revealed will of God is love. If we have any inward and divine touch of the secret will of God, all the breathings of his heart are love. O then, saith he, let us take in the love of God, that his love may become a divine immortal seed of all love and loveliness in us."

It is true the will of God is an *absolute sovereign*, without any control or confinement; his wisdom is unalterable, his power is unlimited and unbounded; and in all his perfections he is an arbitrary being. But arbitrary government is due to his wisdom, because nothing can mend it, to his power; because it is the power of his love and goodness; and to his will, because as hath been said, it is love; and it is our interest, and the interest of all things to allow this sovereignty, because it is ever attended with an eternal goodness to measure and regulate it; and because it can do nothing but that which is good, and whatever is best in its proper season.

And so I come to show the *sovereignty* and dominion of God over all things, hath its foundation, virtue, perfection, and pre-eminence, in his love and goodness. It is founded in the infinite excellencies of his nature, and on this account he claims it, Isa. xlvi. 9, 10: "I am God, and there is none like me, I will do all my pleasure."

The whole exercise of this sovereignty and dominion is as the right, so the *discovery* of his infinite love and goodness. Although it is an absolute sovereignty and dominion, yet there is nothing of tyranny in it; for it is throughout managed by the rule of wisdom, righteousness, love, and goodness; his sweetness is a sweetness of grace, love; and that grace is the highest, sweetest, and most exalted name of love, as hath been said.

If we take a view of his sovereignty and dominion in the nature, tendency and the design of all the laws he hath given us in the excellency and perfection of them, we shall find that he is not here mere arbitrary will, such will as hath no reason besides itself; but that his will itself is the highest law of all wisdom and goodness, all equity and fitness. It is as one saith, the τὸ ὄντως itself decreeing, willing and acting.

All his *moral* laws flow from his own nature, and are absolutely good; for what hath

* *Misquoted, I suppose*, for 1 John iv. 16.
† *Written by* Peter Sterry.

he commanded us here, but that we should give ourselves to him, to whom, and upon whom we live; still to acknowledge him by whose power we were, and at whose pleasure we are; and always to depend upon him, which is the very law, state, and necessity of our being, and therefore ought to be our choice. To believe the God of truth, to fear the God of power and justice, to love the highest love and loveliness in the highest degree, to enter into and centre our souls upon the most unalterable good, to take up our ultimate satisfaction in Him who is the beginning, the way, the end of all things, to give all glory, and to attribute all good to our Creator, to resign ourselves and to seek our rest alone in him, and to be still returning into him, into his bosom, who is our original glory; to obey in all things his revealed will, which is the copy of the will, which is in himself, and which is himself, and which is the rule and measure of all goodness, rectitude and perfection, to converse with him as the parent of our beings, as the father of our spirits, in a free and cheerful manner, as one in whom we live, move and have our being; perpetually encompassed by him, and never moving out of him; to resign all our ways and lives up to him, with an equal and indifferent mind, as knowing that he guides and governs all things in the best manner, according to the highest rule of goodness, and that our part and portion is to behold and admire the excellent harmony of all his works, to sink ourselves as low in humility before him as we are in self-nothingness; to express a Godlike spirit and life in this world, throughout all our converses with it, taking from him the continual pattern of our lives, and being throughout, a resembling of him in all our dealings with others; to do good, show mercy and compassion, administering justice and righteousness in the world, being always full of charity and good works, looking upon ourselves as having nothing to do in this world but to display the glory of our original, and to frame our minds, our lives, and all our actions according to our first pattern, always to do that to others which is just and right in itself, and according to the measure we would have them do with us. These and several other things of this nature, respecting God, ourselves, and our neighbors, which are the branches of that moral righteousness God requires from us, they are all immutable, unalterable, true, just, and necessary, if we were under no obligation from his absolute command.

In a word, he hath in these things commanded us only to be our *true selves*, for all this is no more than the nature, measure and weight of the true man, as *Plotinus* calls him; yea in all this, he hath only commanded us to be happy, and it is our greatest offence against him not to be so. We are under a natural obligation to all these things; there is no need of the formality of a law in these cases; for these things are all published and proclaimed in our very beings; a man must cease to be what God made him, before he can think himself exempted here, or desire to be so. We are in these things engaged at once to do our duty, and to mind our happiness; we must wrong ourselves as well as offend God and our neighbours in every act of disobedience here. Yea, therefore, we offend him here, because we wrong ourselves and our neighbours; for he is not at all hurt by our doing this, and we cannot strike at his authority in these laws, but we must stab ourselves, and endeavour as far as in us lies to kill all our fellow-creatures; so foolish, so furious, so implacable a thing is every breach of this moral law of God.

And so also for his positive laws; they are all relatively good; as our Saviour speaks of the sabbath, made for the good of man, and do all give place when they justle with any other law of moral duty, or human necessity. God gave these laws, not so much to manifest his absolute dominion and sovereignty as some think, but for the good of those that were enjoined to obey them, and as an expression throughout of the divine care and goodness, as well as power and authority; and this belief *Moses* endeavours almost throughout the book of *Deuteronomy* to strengthen the *Israelites* in. Yea, his very ceremonial laws, they were all types, figures, shadows, of the good things that were to come: there is in short the highest good, *philanthrophy*, equality, fitness, and charity, running through all his *laws*.

If again we take a view of his sovereignty and dominion, as he reigneth over, ruleth and rideth upon all form of things, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth in heaven and in earth, we shall find it to be all a sovereign love and goodness.

He from whom all laws take their rise and emanation, is not himself, as one saith, without law, nor in a sober sense above it, for the primitive rule of his economy in this world, are not the only and sole results of an absolute will, but the sacred decrees of the highest reason, wisdom, and goodness; and therefore those grandees who call themselves God's vicegerents in this world, have as much mistaken the true notion of him they pretend to represent, as they have forgotten the interest of the people whose trustees they are, when they have assumed a power to themselves, and sovereignty above law. The prerogative of God himself is nothing else but an absoluteness, a sovereignty, a transcendency of goodness, strongly taking hold of all things at pleasure, and irresistibly imparting itself to them. That prerogative which is essential to God, which is originally in him, who hath no dependency upon his creatures, and can derive nothing from them, it is still exerted for their good, and is a sovereignty of goodness. It is not, was never yet, nor will be laid out against, but for his creatures in the rescue, service, defence, and recovery of them; and therefore all claim to any such thing on earth, must be of the same nature, a sovereignty, a transcendency of power for the good and *welfare* of the *whole*, not the *will* and pleasure of any *particular*; and this is plain, whether such prerogative be derived from God or from the people; for if it be from God, it ought to be like God, having him for its original and pattern—and if it be from the people, it ought certainly to be for them, and not against them, and to be interpreted as their letter or attorney, a power not given for their hurt but advantage; for

g throughout nature ends where it

t no man may pretend the public
ad cover his private and corrupt in-
n such pretences against the general
interest of the whole, it is neces-
all prerogative and claim to power
r, should be directed and bounded
for as a philosopher saith, *the law*
vern all, or else you make a gap in
of government for all manner of
and looseness to break in; and this
iple and law in Christianity, that we
vide things honest in the sight of all,
17. Things honest, or beautiful, or
s the word signifies, in the sight of
And no man is in his administration
n affairs, to justify himself from
ly, but from those other laws he is
hout him, at least from the true rea-
pirit of them; for there I make a just
. Our Saviour was the best Jew that
d, and did most perfectly fulfil the
w, and yet as those doctors thought,
the *letter* of it, when he, most of all,
e *spirit* of that law. This is most
hat all power, prerogative, and privi-
be understood and exerted for pre-
and not to mischief; thus is it in the
eing, and much more must be in all
ings.

ie, God, and he only, is an absolute
, without any limitation, constraint,
ement; his will is a law to himself,
ll things else. Arbitrary government
ht, his due: but we must not for all
: he is nothing (at least) but mere
will in our senses. He is not made
l, an authority and power, without
tial goodness and justice to measure
late them. I readily grant the will
undetermined by any thing but itself,
is not a will absolutely indifferent to
; for it can will nothing but that
good. And although this will be the
or measure of God's justice and wis-
f; yet it is also true, that this will is
rmined by a rule or reason of good.
is at once, it makes all things good
; them, and wills them because they
it is at once arbitrary, and in its ar-
s most highly reasonable and desi-
od is arbitrary will and power, not
rupt sense and practice, but in a di-
n and sense; arbitrary will and pow-
sense and practice, is nothing else
ness and impotency, a brutish fury
ess, mere humour, an irrational appe-
far from upholding, that it destroys
ment, not only the true blessings of
very right notion of it. But God is
vine sense; his arbitrariness and ab-
wisely and justly disposing itself,
potency reaching all things, an irre-
odness, justice and wisdom, or as
decorousness, fitness, and as was said
itself, still willing and acting it, so,
hich is absolutely the best, is an in-
le law to it, because it is his very
Not that he is bound or obliged to
it, in our poor servile sense of these
s below, or by any command or law
from another as superior; this would destroy his liberty, and indeed his being; this would be a contradiction to the perfections of his own nature, from which he cannot possibly deviate, no more than unged himself; and did we rightly understand this matter, we should no more dispute about our own poor, broken, low, and divided notions of it, but happily be delivered from all the unnecessary disputes on both sides about it.

And now as an excellent person saith very well, what understanding or will of man or an angel, must not with an unexpressible pleasure resign themselves and all to this absolute sovereign, divine will, when this will appears to us nothing arbitrary, but in goodness itself, its own object rule and perfection; a goodness which is eternally, unalterably and immovably the supreme and universal goodness, containing in itself all kinds and degrees of goodness at an equal height with itself; a goodness to which every understanding and will by its own principle and most essential activity and motion is carried up with a necessity and irrestibleness, most rationally and most voluntarily, that is, most divinely, harmonious and agreeable. What spirit, endued with an understanding and a will, can forbear from casting itself with sweetest transports into the arms and absolute conduct of this most absolute and arbitrary good, *viz.* of a most absolute and arbitrary goodness? Think once of God as wisdom, goodness, sweetness, justice, love itself, all pure, unmixt, unconfined in their most absolute essences, in their highest exaltation, in their greatest amplitude, in their most potent vigour; and when you have these thoughts, tell me, if all things within you do not with the fullest concurrence meet in this one only most passionate desire, that this God, this *best mind*, as the Stoics speak, may alone conduct you, and the whole course of all things. Tell me, reader, if it be not thy interest, and the interest of all things, that this God should be absolute, arbitrary, and uncontrollable, and under no law, but from himself, and what himself is to himself? We read in a story of a barbarian ambassador, who came on purpose to the Romans of old, to negotiate for leave to become their servants. Sure I am, it cannot be more the duty than it must be the wisdom, the policy, the interest of every mind to be still in obedience and subjection to God, under the government and conduct of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. This is indeed the safety and security of all creatures, that God should be *absolute*, arbitrary, and uncontrollable. Who can desire his wisdom should be altered when nothing can amend it, his power should not be unlimited and unbounded when all other power would be ruinous, if not subordinate to his power?

CHAPTER XXII.

Shewing that the very Anger of God is kindled and acted by his Love, a most pure and perfect Love, and subservient to it, and therefore cannot finally overpower it, and subdue it into subordination to itself.

To make this plain, I would give a more

general, and then a more particular explication of this anger.

That I would say in the general explanation of this anger is this.

Anger is attributed to God by a two-fold figure; the first is called an *anthropopathy*, when passions proper to men are applied to God, while by the suiting of the language to the capacities of the hearers, God is represented to us in the form and in the fashion of a man. The other figure is a *metonymy*, where the cause is set for the effect, and the thing signified in the place of the sign.

It is a metonymical way of speaking, which expresseth the effect by the cause; so the scriptures speaking with the *tongue of man* (as the Jews express it) representing those effects of the divine providence, by the names of the anger and the wrath of God, which answer to those effects that commonly proceed from anger and wrath in men.

Thus by this two-fold figure, those changeable passions in created spirits, which bring forth, and express themselves by changes of good or evil, the effects and signs of those passions are applied to the unchangeable God, when he brings forth the like passions in his works: the Holy Scripture speaking here with the tongue, and in the language of a man.

But all such figurative expressions concerning God, are to be understood with this caution and rule, every thing indeed in the creature is a figure, which hath its original pattern answering to it in the divine nature; but all imperfections attending the creature are to be removed, all perfection in the uttermost heights and most absolute fulness, are to be attributed to the original pattern, when by the shadowy figure in the creature, you look to the exemplary and primitive *truth* in God; and so by those changeable and divers passions in man, you are to represent to yourselves in God, a goodness, a power, an unsearchable richness of variety, and manifestly various wisdom, and all these apart and together, with the most absolute simplicity and highest unity in the Divine essence, producing all diversity of accidents, all changes of good and evil in the design, which cometh forth at once as one piece divinely rich in all variety from him, and as one entire image filled with the riches of all distinct beauties of him, who is unchangeable, who is unchangeably, and so most perfectly one. This is my general account of anger in God. Divine anger in God, is called by the aforesaid figures, which expresses things in God after the manner of men.

I would now bring this matter down to every understanding by a more particular explanation of this anger. To lift up then the veil, and to discover the divine mysteries beneath this figure, the divine secret and hidden glory in the divine anger. Anger in God shews itself, and its innocency in these particulars:

1. There is in God a *contrariety* to every thing that is evil; as light and darkness, so is the divine nature and sin contrary to one another. The divine love and beauty in their own nature, are essentially and eternally contrary to sin, whose nature altogether subsists in deformity and enmity. Now the very principle and essence of anger lies in this contrariety; so far as it is innocent and divine. God is eternally the same; when you present those things which are suitable to him, that are holy, he is said to be well pleased; because there is a suitableness between him and that which is presented to him. When you set darkness, evil, and sin before God; now he is said to be angry, because there is a contrariety between that excellency, which is God, and sin.

2. The second particular in anger is this, *a clouding of his countenance;* then we say a father, a friend is angry with us, when he will no more speak kindly to us as formerly he did. When his countenance is shut towards us, then we say, God is angry with man; when he withdraws the discoveries of himself from man, when the joys that flow from him are ebbing, and return back upon himself again, when he hides the light of his countenance from us.

3. The third particular of anger in God, carries this along with it, that it is a *rising of spirit seeking the destruction of that which stands in the way of its content.* It is anger in God when his spirit is moved and breaks forth within him, to destroy every thing that offends, together with the principles of it; his spirit riseth to destroy not only sin, but the sinning principle, the natural man, the flesh; when our God thus comes forth as a consuming fire upon us, and when he answers by terrible things in righteousness, he is then our God, and the *God of our salvation.*

Moralists observe, that the object of anger is that which stands in the way of one's contentment, and that the workings of anger are passages to one's content, by the destruction of that impediment. We say well according to man, that God is angry, when he riseth to destroy and burn up all the fuel of sin, that he may make way to the setting up of his glory every where. Thus God expresseth his own glory, Isa. xxvii. 4: "Fury is not in me, but if you set the briars and thorns against me in battle, I would go through them, I would burn them together; if ye put the stubble in the way, I will pass through it and consume it." These are the particulars of anger in God.

The divine love and beauty in their own nature are, as hath been said, essentially and eternally contrary to sin, whose nature altogether subsists in deformity and enmity. The very entrance of sin, as a great man observes, is designed to this end, that the supreme love may declare its supreme purity, in all its lovelinesses and sweetnesses by the powers, the heights, the irreconcilableness of its opposition in all forms of contrariety to the enmity and deformity of sin, that it may manifest its sovereign power and sweetness in subduing sin to itself, in turning its evil to a greater good, a more glorious and eternal good, that by its contrariety to sin it may render itself more amiable, and by its conquest over sin, more admirable in all eyes and hearts.

I shall conclude this general and particular explanation of anger in God, with these two universally and necessarily agreed notes.

1. The movement of this anger is a *divine excellency* in God; it damps not his love; he can no more cease to be love when he is angry, than he can cease to be God.

When God is angry, he enjoys himself as sweetly now as ever he did before. His own love, and his own loveliness, and the delights that flow from them are nothing at all troubled, and therefore he saith, "fury is not in me." Fury is not a thing that dwells among his contents; when he is most angry, then is he in the same joy and glory as he was in before; for his anger moves as in a sphere without. All in him is love, and even that in him, on which the out-going wrath is bottomed and founded, is still love, pure love, or a variation of the movements of love.

Again, the anger of God damps not the sweetness and love of God towards any of his *saints*. He is as much in love with them when he is angry with them, as when he was smiling upon them; nay, the anger of God towards his own is the fruit of his love, and a strong expression of it; as a heathen could say, those whom God afflicts, *fortiter illos amat*, he loves them strongly; his anger hath love still for its spring and for its end.

God hath, as I may so speak, a double content, the enjoyment of himself, and the enjoyment of his saints in himself. When he is angry, it is so far from weakening this content, that anger from God ever flows from his love, and from that desire and delight that he hath to make his own joy, and the joy of his saints mutual, in the full enjoyment one of another.

Nor doth this anger alter or change the bowels, the tendernesses which, as he is the father of all, he hath to all his offspring. Job ix. 22, we read, "he destroys the perfect and the wicked." If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent: when the scourge falleth alike upon the innocent and the wicked, God laugheth at it. When wicked men suffer for their sins, when innocent persons are refined by their sufferings, the eye of God is fixed upon his own divine loveliness and glory alike in both. The purest and most perfect love acteth here toward this most pure and perfect loveliness and glory in both; for the meeting and blissful embraces of these two, this love and loveliness in the divine nature, his joy and complacency is alike in both equally, fully at the height. As heat and cold which continually fight in the elements below, are in the heavenly bodies; but after so eminent a manner, that they meet and enfold each other with a most harmonious agreeableness. Thus anger and love, as all forms of things more discordant in the creatures, are first in the divine nature; but they are there with an eminence, with a transcendency in which they are refined, harmonized, and heightened far above all imperfection; here they all meet as a most grateful, and most agreeable variety in the entire and undivided unity of the same eternal love, of the same eternal God. As from this height of a most perfect unity, these divine varieties bring forth various effects in a shadowy resemblance here below, they make the figures of the whole divinely one, and divinely beautiful; and as divine seals, they impress the figure of their own divine unity upon each single effect.

My second note is this, the movement of this anger in God is a *divine wisdom*. Anger in God doth not darken and disturb his wisdom. It is not with God as it is with man. Let man have made it the design of many years to make a friend happy; yet if any variance afterwards happens, now the counsels and designs of this man, instead of making him happy, are upon crossing him, when the intent of his mind at first, was to raise up and make him happy. When God is angry, he is one even in that anger. The contrivances of God are as great and as full to make that saint or person with whom he is angry, blessed and glorious as ever it was before. Anger is so far from disturbing the wisdom of God, that it is the instrument of that wisdom; and God is never angry but upon a design to make his saints and his church more blessed and glorious by his anger. And so may we say of his wisdom, with respect to all his other works, over and above whom his mercy extends. God never loseth nor gives over his grand design of love in his anger, which he hath locked up in his own breast from his whole creation. A picture, as one speaks, consists of crooked lines as well as strait, and of shades as well as of lights and glories. Divine love, which "abounds towards us in all wisdom and in all prudence," as the apostle speaks, Eph. i.; divine love, which infinitely transcends all the skill, the art, the wit, the contrivance of all men, knows how to make every thing beautiful in its season and place, and every particular in his whole design, to add sweetness and lustre to the whole piece. Whether he lays dark or bright colours; whether he makes shades or lights, crooked lines or straight, or circular, he is still actuated by that idea of beauty and love, which he hath in his own mind; he is still forming the same lovely face, carrying on the same design in every stroke and colour. Sometimes, as the person before cited speaks, he makes a land of Egypt, sometimes a passage out of it; here a Red Sea, there a way through it; now a wilderness, then a land of Canaan. But still in all, he keeps his eye upon the same divine design of love and glory, and is still forming this image of love and glory in every Egypt, Red Sea, wilderness, and Canaan. He is still unchangeable and the same, though in a varied form, but ever equally himself, equally living, equally beautiful, never fading, never passing away. According to this account of anger and wrath in God, I cannot, without affronting God and forfeiting my own understanding, conceive how anger and wrath can at last, and finally prevail in the breast of that sweetness and wisdom, who hath told us, that "anger resteth in the bosom of fools;" and hath commanded us "not to let the sun go down upon our wrath."

Anger and wrath in us, is indeed a fond, foolish, rash, hair-brained thing, *est brevis ira furor*, a short distraction, a frenzy; and our love is as fond, as blind, as giddy as our

anger, but there is no such thing as rashness or fondness in God. He is neither transported beyond bounds in his displeasure, nor in his love. He doth not correct us for his pleasure but for our profit, to make us "partakers of his own holiness," Heb. xii. 10; and on the other hand, if there be need, we shall be sure to be in heaviness for a season, as Peter tells us, 1 Pet. i. 6. Anger in God is but a particular extraneous movement of his justice, which is the purity, the wisdom, the order, the law of the divine nature, opposing the discord, the deformity, the enmity of sin. Anger in God is but the even and equal *balance* of his goodness, the faithfulness and exactness of his love. It is his love to us which kindles his anger against us, which puts him into an indignation against sin, which separates between us and him, that he and we might be brought together. This anger of his burns until it hath consumed all its own proper objects; and so by losing them comes to lose itself, and to be swallowed up into the love which first sent it forth. Thus anger in God hath love for its root and for its fruit; it is indeed all but love disguised, love hiding itself in order to a more glorious discovery. It is all but love, consuming, burning up all that which stands in its way, and hinders it from shining out in its full glory, that so it may obtain a more perfect victory and triumph.

I will shut up this particular head, with a few words to saints and to sinners, and to both mixed, for so they are in this state.

1. Let us learn from hence, how good and sweet a God the saints have, and how blessed a portion is their God. They have indeed a God that can be angry with them when they sin against him, but so that his anger itself is love, is a design to make them more glorious and blessed. What should we fear but the anger of our God? But even here we have cause to be comforted; for it is an unchangeable love he works by, even in his anger; yea, his very anger itself flows from that love, and is the faithful pursuit of it. If God smile upon you, happy are you. But you are happy too though he be angry with you and frown upon you: "He forgets not his covenant in his anger," Psa. lxxxix. What can make us miserable but the anger of God? And yet in this he carries on our blessedness as entirely as when he doth in smiling. This is the happiness of a saint, that the dreadfulle it of all things, the anger of God itself, hath still a mystery in it of power, sweetness and wisdom, carrying on this blessedness.

2. Let us learn from hence, to observe and govern our anger by these two characters, which have been given of the anger in God, so shall our anger be not carnal but divine.

1st. Let there be a predominant principle of sweetness and love in our anger. We are allowed a zeal for God; but not a *bitter zeal*; not a zeal that springs from a root of bitterness within; so as James speaks of that zeal, condemns it immediately to that fountain, which as it blesseth God, so it curses man. Doth thy anger come from a spirit of holiness, from a spirit of blessing? Canst thou say when thou art most angry with man in any case, that yet thou lovest him, and it is thy love to him makes thee angry with him, and in the secret of thy spirit thou couldst joy to receive him into the fellowship of the glory of God with thyself? Now thy anger is indeed divine, if thou canst enjoy a sweetness within when thou art outwardly angry, when thy anger is only the faithfulness of thy love, hath love for its root, design, aim, and end, like the anger, as hath been said, of God, only *love disguised*.

2d. What is the aim of thy anger? Doth thy anger raise a storm in thy breast, where all things are in a tumultuous tempest and disorder in thy apprehension and in thy affection; and doth the bitter zeal of thy anger interrupt thy due pursuit of the general interest of God and of thy country? This renders thy anger suspicious. Is thy anger to revenge thyself upon the person with whom thou art angry? Or is it to make way for the glory of God to break forth to destroy that which is contrary to the Spirit of God in that person? He that is divinely angry distinguishes always between the glory of God, and a compliance with his own humour. He distinguishes carefully the object of his anger, between the person of man and the principle of sin in the man; his anger tends not to the hurt of the person at all. This would be hatred, which is no where allowed: but his anger is altogether to the destruction of sin in the man, and to the saving of the sinner, that the flesh may be destroyed. And he distinguishes as carefully between the glory of God, and a compliance with his own humour. He sits down in the calmness of his own spirit, and there, between God and himself he witnesses, it is not to give way to his humour, or his opinion which is crossed, or to make way for that his opinion, but only for the enlargement of the glory of God, and for a clear passage of the gospel, for which his anger works. Take this for a rule, that when our *own persons* are the cause of our anger, that self is the cause of that anger. All the devil's rage is the love of himself, as he is in himself and not in God; and the object of the devil's rage is against the person of man; it is not the taking away of his estate, or liberty, but it is the destruction of his person; and if he can but destroy that, he will heap upon him all the contents of the world to bring this to pass. Let your anger then, if you would be angry as God is, every where distinguish between the good and the evil. Let the remaining mixture in yourselves instruct you how to carry it towards one another in all this mixture. Love the good, be angry with the evil; advance the good, oppose the evil. But still with all your loving embraces, but every where distinguish with all tenderness of spirit between the person and the evil of the person; discern the evil with a quick and piercing eye, guard yourselves with all your might from it, maintain an irreconcilable aversion and enmity to it, but at the same time love the person; mourn over and groan for the person as for your brother, as for yourself, as for a sick and wounded member of your own body, until he be recovered from the evil which hath captivated him, into a fellowship with

you, into the purity and love of the divine nature, when God so pleases.

3. Let us learn from hence, that there may be anger in God towards his dearest children, and yet nothing in that anger contrary to the mystery, to the sweetness and to the glory of the gospel. What should hinder God from being angry with his own people? Is there not an object of anger in them while they are in the flesh, and whilst sin cleaves to their flesh and to them? Is there not in God, in the excellencies of the God-head, a contrariety unto this flesh and the uncleanness of it? Why then should we scruple to say God may be angry with his own people for their sins? Doth not God frequently carry himself towards his saints, as angry persons towards their friends with whom they are displeased? Doth he not upon our sin draw in his countenance? Doth not the power of God frequently put forth itself on the saints to consume sin in them, and that by terrible methods in righteousness? What is there in all this anger of God towards a saint that doth at all contradict the sweetness and glory of God? Doth he love ever the less for his anger? Nay, he loves so much the more, and this is one of the great mysteries of the gospel, that light and love works in darkness and anger itself. Is the wisdom of God ever the less beautiful? No, the same wisdom that sowed immortality in the grave, and that made the cross to ascend up to glory, can by his anger purify the air of a saint's spirit that it may receive the divine influences more clearly and more sweetly. There is nothing inconsistent in God's anger to his saints with his everlasting and unchangeable love to them, Jam. i. 19, 20: "Every man is exhorted to be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Let it not be a disgression, if I show how this scripture is true in a three-fold sense.

1. The first sense is this: the righteousness of God is not the principle that worketh in the wrath of man; all graces are called fruits of righteousness in the scripture. Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God, and he is our God, and the root of all righteousness in us; yea, our very righteousness. Wheresoever there is true spirituality, the spirit of God worketh in us, but this righteousness worketh not in the wrath of man's spirit. It was not in the great and strong winds which rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, that the Lord was; but in the still and small voice. It is not in a precipitated and angry spirit that God works, but in a simple, and calm, and waiting spirit. 1 Kings xix.

2. The second sense is this: that the works of anger are not righteous works, they are not works approved in the eye of God. You may in your anger kill men for religion-sake. You may in your angry zeal forfeit your estate, give up your bodies to be consumed by fire for the defence of truth. But this is not that which God accounts holiness; if you do all this and have not charity, the sweetest, the highest, and the divinest temper of love.

3. The third sense is, this wrath makes no discovery of the righteousness of God. He that makes a judgment of the actings of Providence, or any state of things in the world, in his anger, and in the discontent of his own spirit, this man will never discover the righteousness of God in it. The secret of God is with a submitted and humble spirit; unto that man will God discover the mysteries of his works, and the beauty and glory that is in all his ways; "blessed are the pure in spirit for they shall see God;" a pure spirit is a calm spirit. There is nothing more contrary to the purity of the air than the dark clouds and foggy vapours. There is nothing more contrary to the purity of our spirits than this anger and wrath. An angry spirit can never see the glory of God, who is love throughout; nor shall ever the glory of God break forth in any of his ways to an angry spirit, until that spirit is swallowed up in the love of God; but the quiet spirit that runs like the waters of *Shiloe*, that spirit doth and shall see God; that spirit shall see the righteousness of God, the excellencies of God; that spirit shall see the counsel of God in all his ways, in all his works, and still cry out, O my God! O infinite love!

4. Let us learn from what hath been said of anger in God, to hate and fly from sin, which is the fuel to that anger, that there may be nothing between God and us but love.

To conclude. There would be no end in speaking of these and some other perfections of God; and therefore I shut up this head of God's being love, and love being the universal perfection of the Deity, with this one general and comprehensive one.

The unsearchableness, the incomprehensibleness and infiniteness of God is an unsearchable, incomprehensible and infinite love and goodness. Not only all that which we know, all that which we can take in of God, so far as he hath discovered himself to us, and given us a capacity to know him; but all that which we cannot understand of him, we reasonably conclude from what hath been said, is all a depth, a mystery, an abyss of love, which still comprehends us and all things, although we and all things can never comprehend it. A depth which swallows up the most capacious spirits of men, saints and angels, but can never be fathomed by any spirit, but that which searcheth the depths of God. This incomprehensibleness of God is made up of those lengths, and breadths, and depths, and heights of love, which passeth all understanding, as we read Eph. iii. 18; a length, breadth, height and depth, which at once extends and exceeds all openings: a depth without bottom, a height without any bound, a breadth, a length without any measure; a love which passeth all knowledge, which stretcheth forth itself beneath, above, through and beyond all things; an unbounded treasury of divine love, goodness and glory; an inexhaustible spring and ocean of love and goodness, and perfection without beginning or end, without bottom or bound. We are too narrow to measure its comprehension, too proud to understand its condescensions, its stoopings, too low to take its heights, too aspiring to fathom its depths. It is a love which

hath in it all the fulness of the God-head. Thus the incomprehensibleness and unsearchableness of God, are the incomprehensible dimensions and comprehensions of his love.

Thus you see how love and goodness is the highest, the most essential and universal perfection of the Diety. It is true God is one, the supreme unity absolutely undivided; comprehending all excellencies, all things within himself, in the simplicity of his own unity, incomprehensibly and infinitely above all division and composition, all things divided and compounded; he is perfectly one, and hath no parts; the justice, the holiness, the power, the wisdom, the will, the goodness of God are all one. As he is in one pure act of all excellencies at their greatest height and in one, so is he justice, holiness, power, wisdom, will and goodness all in one, and this unity of God is the highest and purest love; for as I have been saying all along, God is love, the first and supreme love, is the most high, God over all blessed for ever. The highest, purest, and most spiritual forms in one eternal spirit. This is the love, this is God; he is power, as he is a pure act of almightiness, and this is the strength of his love. He is holiness as he is separate from all mixtures and composition with any thing of the creature; and this holiness as I have shown you, is a spring of all beauties, sweetnesses and loves. He is justice as he is a pure act of entire and most perfect order, and this is the impartial, even and equal balance of his love. He is wisdom, as he is a pure act of highest and most perfect harmony, and this is the conduct, the music of his love. He is will, as he is a pure act of highest and most diffusive goodness, of the richest, sweetest, and fullest love, in which are the proper objects, and so the perfection of the will, as hath been said. He is will, as he is a pure act of most heightened and most comprehensive love, joy and complacency, which as I have already shown you, are the proper and most perfect operations of the will. Thus, as hath been said already, his will and his love are one in their nature, object or operation. He is goodness as he is essentially, and so principally, and so perfectly, infinitely good. Goodness is the nature of God; but still this goodness consists in his love, and the unchangeableness of it: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever." The essence of God is goodness, the formal reason, the essence of his goodness is love. Thus his justice, holiness, power, wisdom and goodness, do all meet in one in his love, at their purest heights, in their greatest freedom, in their most proper and perfect operations. He himself is all these, all these are himself in one pure, simple, perfect act, at the heights of all activity, and this is called love. God is love, and this love is God. He is love multiplying itself into innumerable representations and reflections of itself, that it may contemplate, possess and delight itself infinitely within itself; and in all its works there is no succession or division of acts in God, in him one act comprehends all acts. We indeed give several names to God's act, according to our partial and imperfect consideration of him; but one act of his swallows up all our words, and answers to all our names, and he is but one pure and perfect act, and this pure and perfect act is the justice, the holiness, the power, the wisdom, the sovereignty, the oneness, the unchangeableness, the purity, the simplicity, the unity, the infiniteness, and eternity of his love. Thus, as hath been said, all his attributes are the attributes of his love; so many several names, expressions, glories and triumphs of that love which is himself. Thus love is the moral goodness of God himself, and all his excellencies, the universal perfection of the Diety; that perfection in which all his other perfections are united and concentred; they all centre in this divine love, which is the bond of perfection.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Being a Warning to Sinners.

I CANNOT leave this discourse without an alarm to sinners. Though God be love, all love to saints and sinners, yet he can never love sin nor take the sinner into his bosom, into the eternal embraces of his love, until he hath consumed sin. Do not then, from what you have read, be encouraged to trifle with, and slight the anger of a God. There is no anger so great, so terrible as that which flows from love, finally abused and provoked by us. There is no anger like the anger of the Lamb, the meekest of all creatures. You may read the terribleness of that anger, Rev. vi.

It is dreadful scripture, sinners, that tells you expressly, John iii. last, "that the wrath of God abideth on you." I believe, through the light that God hath given me, and the love I have for you, it shall not always abide upon you; but when it will cease who can tell? I know not the season of the general visitation, though I believe it; sure I am, the fire of that anger and wrath will never go out until the fuel is burnt up.

That it shall at last be so, over and above the reasons in this discourse, I conclude, because we all, one as well as another, are by nature children of wrath; and yet the apostle saith of the first-fruits, "Eph. ii. we who were sometimes children of wrath hath he reconciled." This gives a firm hope that the same love and kindness will rescue the children of wrath in the whole lump. But whilst I am writing of this universal love, let me admonish you what a fearful and dreadful state it is to lie under the wrath of God, to be a child of this wrath, which is beyond all expression terrible. Moses cries out, Ps. xc. 11: "Who knows the power of thine anger, even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath." If none can know it, who can tell it, who can bear it, who then will yet dare try it? Let me give these two hints as I pass on.

1. The power of all evil lies in the wrath of God as in its root. The wrath of God is the root, the treasury, the store-house, the power of all evils, all the evils which are scattered through the earth and hell, lie wrapped and summed up together here. Who knows the

power of thy wrath, who knows these evils beyond every name of evil, that is named in this life of sickness, melancholy, and horrors, which the anger of God is able to bring forth, as twenty several shillings lie together with advantage in one twenty shilling piece of gold, and that in a more precious metal, so all particular evils that are scattered through earth and hell, they all lie wrapt up together, summed up in one head in the wrath of God, and that in a more eminent way, in an higher nature.

2dly. There is an immediate, a naked presence in the wrath of God, to give a weight to it; some divines, as I remember, express hell after this manner, all diseases, pains, griefs; here are evils by a weak tincture only of divine wrath, a little drop of wrath mingling itself with them; hell is pure wrath. Hell is the abstract of wrath, the evil of diseases, pains, and griefs abstracted from them and heightened to the utmost. I have no curiosity about this matter, but as all the joys in the creatures are a weak tincture, a weak glance of divine love, like the sun shining upon the water, a weak touch of divine love, like the rays of the sun-beams reflected in a burning glass, as the same person expresses it; but in God, in Christ, all good, all beauty, all sweetess is to be found in an infinite purity without being alloyed, or limited by any mixture. In such a manner may all evil be in the wrath of God. They tell us again, that God puts forth his strength to uphold the miserable wretches in hell under their torments, else they were unable to bear them. Admitting the one, the other must be true. That God himself puts forth himself immediately and naked upon them, at once to torment them, and also to sustain them for their torments, I understood no more of this, but in order to a refining; and let God take his own methods for doing that, I am sure the almightiness of love and goodness cannot eternally exact such an infinite power to sustain his own offspring in eternal torments.

We read, Isa. xxx. 33: "Tophet is prepared of old," &c. The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it; the breath or the spirit of the Lord is the Lord in his spiritual and naked appearance coming forth in that appearance to torment a soul. This gives me a purer notion than the vulgar ones of the torments of hell; and this gives me also a hope that that breath which kindles that torment will blow it out. When an angel only appeared as a friend and to a great prophet, to the prophet *Daniel*, yet he was not able to bear the presence. O! whither, poor sinner, wilt thou sink, what will become of thee, when God himself shall appear nakedly, and immediately upon thee, in the fulness of his God-head, and that as an enemy in the greatest contrariety to thee, at the highest enmity against thee as can be! O! who can express the riches of the joy and glory of those spirits, upon whom God shall appear immediately and nakedly as a friend, as a lover in union with them! And who can express those pangs, those horrors, those unspeakable and nameless things which that poor soul must then sink under, upon whom the same God shall appear with the same nakedness of his God-head, in a direct contrariety to it, making his glory itself a fire upon it. The same principle and power which in heavenly bodies is a glorious light, in earthly bodies is a raging, consuming fire; so is the God-head a delightful light in itself, and to all good spirits, but to sinful man a devouring fire. O, sinner, what will become of thee, when God shall thus break forth upon thee in the naked appearance of his wrath, and what a dreadful estate art thou in, whilst in thy natural state; thou art but as so much fuel, so much dry stuble for this wrath to kindle upon thee, and consume thee. O fly from this wrath: that love, that pure love which kindles this wrath at last upon thy final provoking it, is every moment ready to receive thee, and prevent it.

Obj. But sinners may say to me, what do you mean to terrify us thus, by telling us we are in a state of wrath, and that the wrath of God abides in us? For our parts, we feel nothing of all this you have said, and will not trouble ourselves about such bugbears and hobgoblins as you have been endeavouring to fright us with. And indeed, who is there among all the natural and carnal men in the world that will believe this report before they feel it, and how few are they that feel it before it be too late? Take therefore these few accounts of their insensibleness.

1. You read in I Sam. xvi. 23, that when *David* took his harp and played upon it, *Saul* had some ease from that evil spirit which tormented him. Thy life in this world is an harp, which, while it is played upon, it entertains thee, diverts thee, and takes off from thee the sense of that wrath which thou liest under, and which abides upon thy soul. But alas, for all this, thy condition in this respect is no better than the devil's; for although he be bound up in chains of darkness, yet hath he leave to go up and down upon the face of this earth, carrying his chains with him: he hath liberty to enjoy the light of this world, and this is some mitigation to his torment, and therefore in the story of the possessed man, when Christ came to dispossess him, the devil first cries out, "art thou come to torment us before our time!" to cast us from the face of the earth, where we have some relief to our torments, and so shut us up in the bottomless pit, Mat. viii. 29. before the great and the last day. And the same devil beseeches *Jesus Christ* that he would not send them out of the country, but that he would let them enter into the swine, rather than not live upon the earth at all. Thus thou and the devil are both in one condition in this respect. The noise of vain delights in this worldly life, doth for a while drown and lay asleep the miserable sense of the sorrows of that state, of the sin and wrath under which thy soul lies, and this is a great device of the devil upon thee, and there wants nothing but the breaking up of the charms, and the dissolving of the enchantment of a seeming false life; there wants nothing but the opening of thy eyes, which may happen every moment, and thou art in hell, as is said of *Dives*; the charms, the sorceries of a false seeming life suffer thee not to have any sense of this thy state that as a bird of wings thou mayest fly from it; but when thy eyes come

to be opened the charms are broken, the sorceries are dissolved, the false seeming life is fled away; now by dismal experience thou findest sin to be a knot of devils twining about thy whole body and spirit, fixing in every part their venomous and burning stings, filling all with the fire of hell.

2. Let wicked persons do all they can to dissemble this matter, yet they are not without sharp pangs, and quick feelings of their dreadful state. Sinner, I appeal to the secret of thy own bosom, what means that horrid darkness which surrounds thy soul continually, which shuts out from thee the light of God, and a comfortable eternity? What means that worm of fear and anxiety which is continually at thy heart, in the midst of all thy pleasures? What means those strugglings and agitations of spirit, those dividings and sinkings of souls, as on a tempestuous sea, as the length of a bottomless gulf without any harbour to receive thee, without any bed in thy spirits on which thou mayest cast thyself and rest? Art thou not, whether thou wilt or not, afraid of God? and is there not a terror in thy soul as often as thou thinkest of him; and when he at any time thrusts himself into thy thoughts, is it not with thee as it was with *Felix*? Acts xxiv. 23: "and as Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled."

God himself, who best knows the spirits of poor men, tells the wicked men, Isa. lvii. 20, 21, that "they are like a troubled sea which cannot rest, and there is no peace to the wicked." Let wicked men strive never so much to make themselves deaf to conscience, yet it is not in their power, as one speaks, to make conscience dumb to them; every sinner hath that in his own breast which is still accusing, convicting and condemning him: for there is in every man a light, either shining or burning, refreshing or tormenting him, according to his actions; a witness which is not to be reproached or contradicted; a judge which is not to be bribed, an executioner which cannot be resisted. I appeal to all sinners, whether their own spirits are not as a den of lions, bears, and wolves, within the midst of all their jollity without? I appeal to them, whether their mirth be not a forced, a necessitous thing to prevent and anticipate their sad, dark, and melancholy thoughts, like a poor man that is not easy at home, and therefore abandons himself to ill courses abroad? I appeal to them, whether they are not often afraid of themselves, and their own shadows? whether they are not filled with shame, confusion, griefs, affrights, distractions, and despairs? Whether their very rose-buds are not as so many briars and thorns, burning their hearts, their flesh, their souls? Whether their very joys and pleasures, are not so many tormenting as well as tempting forms of things? Whether in the heights of all their delights, they are without their sharp pangs? Are not these things irresistible symptoms of that sense which sinners more or less continually carry about in their bosoms of that dreadful state of wrath which they do feel themselves to be in, or are at least afraid they are?

3. In the 2 Cor. iv. 4, St. Paul tells us: "If his gospel be hid, it is hid from them which are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Thy insensibleness then of the fearful condition thou art in, is, O sinner, the greatest part of thy misery, and the greatest design of the devil upon thee is to blind thine eyes and harden thy heart against the sight and sense of the light of the divine beauty, and the glory of the God-head, shining in the heavenly and eternal person of Christ. He blinds thine eyes and hardens thy heart to the sight and sense of that wrath thou art under, that so thou mayest be absolutely lost until the final recovery.

In the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that Gehenna of the Jews, that Tophet, you read that the idolatrous parents came and put their children into the arms of the brass image, and then kindled a fire upon it and offered them up as a sacrifice by fire to Moloch! and whilst the poor infants and children were there lamentably consuming in the arms of the idol image, the drums did beat perpetually to drown the noise of their screechings, lest their parents, hearing their cries, should be moved with compassion and save them before they were quite consumed. Thus, O sinner, Satan deals with thee; he hath shut up thy soul fast in the brazen arms of a spiritual death and wrath; but whilst thou art in this world, there is some possibility, some hope of thy being saved from this death and wrath, of thy flying from this wrath, and escaping if thou art once made sensible of it. The devil to prevent this, beats up the drums of all worldly pleasure, pomps and entertainments continually upon thee, filling all thy senses with the sound of vanity, of fleshly impressions and pleasure, that so he might drown in thy spirit the sense of that death and wrath in which thy soul is consuming until he hath hurried thee off from the stage of this world; then he thinks he is sure of thee, and that thou art lost for ever. But he knows not the after-counsel of God, and not only he, but perhaps the angels in heaven do not yet know it. And now as Adam when once he had fallen, had his eyes open to see from whence and whither he was fallen: so now thy soul is lost and past recovery, as the blind devil thinks. The devil of himself makes haste to open thine eyes, and give thee tender senses, that thou mayest inwardly have the sharpest feeling of that death and wrath which all this while hath lain upon thee.

O my friends, think of this dreadful scripture: "if our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them."

I beseech you here to take notice of two things which I will only mention:

1. The devil's grand design and end, and that is to blind your mind. To what? To the image of God. To what image of God? To the spiritual and heavenly image of God,

which is in the person of Christ. This is his grand design and end, to blind your minds that you should not see that spiritual image of God which is in the person of Christ, lest the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face or person of Christ should shine into your heart and destroy his kingdom; for there needs no more to the undoing of a cheat and impostor than a discovery.

2. Observe here the devil's highway to accomplish his grand design and end; and this is the world; he makes use of his power and prerogative, as he is God of this world. There is then another inferior image of God, beside this spiritual image of God in Christ, and this is the world, or the creation. Jesus Christ is the essential increated image of God; this world is a shadowy and created image of him and divides itself into several images.

There is the sensual image, which consists of the pleasant, the beautiful, the glorious things of the earth here below.

There is the celestial image which is made up of sun, moon, and stars, and their bright and potent bodies above.

There is the rational, the intellectual, the angelical image, which consists in the invisible things, in the intellectual pleasures and perfections of this world, in the principles and powers and sweetnesses of this creation. Now the devil makes use of all these, or any of these, to set them before your eyes instead of Jesus Christ, and so to blind you, that you should never look farther to that supreme and heavenly image, to that original glory which is Jesus Christ himself.

The devil, as the god of this world and the father of lies, clothes himself with this worldly image of things, either in the visible, in the sensual, in the rational, intellectual, or angelical parts of it; and thus he blinds your mind, draws your soul down into his own foul and hellish embraces, and so fills your spirit with the filthy and polluted images of this world, that you are insensible of your own wretched condition, and incapable of taking in the light of heavenly beauties which shines from the face or person of Christ. He sets before your understanding the sensual image of earthly created things in their brightest beauty and sweetest pleasure, and if he can fix this upon your souls instead of Jesus Christ, and make you to settle here, he satisfies himself, he destroys your souls with the less cost and trouble. But if you are yet restless in the midst of all the beauties and pleasures of sense, he will cover his hook and catch your souls with a bait of rational and intellectual pleasures, and persuade you to think that you have here what should satisfy the better inclination of your souls. If he cannot here stop the unquiet and restless powers of your souls, he will then carry you up to the invisible glories of this world, he will make you taste of the invisible powers of it, in all the moral, literal, and angelical powers of it, and now he will persuade you that you are without doubt in a good condition. He will present those invisible and angelical images of this world before you in such a glory, and counterfeit resemblance of Jesus Christ, that if your heart be taken with any thing of the creature, you will cast your souls now into the arms of it, and cry out, certainly the altar of the Lord is before us. And this is the devil's strong delusion; and thus are ye in continual danger, and under the power of his delusion, whilst your hearts cleave to any part of this creation whatsoever it be.

I beseech you, according to this method of the devil, and this way of his delusion, to learn the true reason of your insensibleness of your own condition, and of the excellencies of Christ; it is because the God of this world hath blinded your eyes, that you should not see the dreadfulness of one, and the glory of the other; and if ye continue thus in this blindness, it is because you are to perish with this world and the God of it. Till the God of this world and the master of the devil save it and him.

God at the beginning did set up the image of his own beauties in the creation; the devil at the fall, did set up this image instead of the true beauties, so it became of an image an idol, a representation, a rebellion.

Thus the devil hath persuaded and deluded you to fix your affections upon that shadowy image, instead of Jesus Christ the true image, and so fight against Christ in the defence of that.

Hear this all ye souls that have any sense of your wretched condition, and no discerning of, no desire after Christ.

The devil as the God of this world, and the father of lies, hath presented himself before you, in all the delightful forms and images of things, making you believe that these empty flying shadows are the true riches, the only realities, the only substance, and that Jesus Christ, the heavenly image of God, is but a pleasant fancy and fiction. Through this created image of things, the devil pours forth himself, his filthy lusts, his false loves: thus the God of this world hath wed you in a counterfeit shape of false beauties, sweetnesses, glories, powers, and joys. Thus the father of lies hath deceived and possessed your souls, and made them his strumpets, upon which he continually begets young devils, false forms of things, which you kiss and dandle upon your knee, and play and sport yourself with, stopping your ears to all the alarms and music of the preacher, who would waken you into a sense of your miserable condition, and open to you, that by these dalliances you suck in the poison and fire of hell, and of all the devils into all your veins. I beseech sinners to consider seriously of this matter in their retirement, and to think assuredly, as often as this world attracts you, in any image of it, in its visible excellencies, and in its invisible powers, that the devil is now casting you into an enchanting sleep, and in your sleep deluding you with false dreams. That as often as this world presents itself to you in any of its beautiful and pleasant forms, you are as a man to whom this present world presents herself as a woman, with all the advantages of wisdom, loveliness, extraordinary skill and power to work wonderful things, and she offers herself to this man to be his spouse; but all this while, this woman is a witch, a sorceress, an

apparition from hell; think assuredly with yourself, that all these worldly images of things are the cup of the devil, that all the fleshly lusts, the false loves that we drink in so greedily from this cup, are but the poisons given us from the devil, the very spirit of hell, and of all the devils; this is the spirit that makes hell to be hell, and all the evil spirits to be devils. Think assuredly with yourselves that this world in all the parts of it is the devil's mouth, by which he woos and solicits you into his embraces; that while you court and kiss your harlots and strumpets, your idols of gold and silver, of worldly wisdom and power, these earthly and fleshly images of things, this world and the lusts thereof, the delusive objects of this world in their vain and vile pleasures, profits and delights, you kiss the mouth of the devil and are kissed by him, you embrace him and are embraced by him; and that by these kisses and embraces he invisibly and insensibly breathes his own spirit into you, the spirit of darkness, ignorance, blindness and unbelief; the spirit of lust, passions, wrath and uncleaness; the spirit of vain, false, hellish loves, lulling you thus asleep, and benumbing all your senses, that you apprehend not the danger you are in. Think assuredly with yourselves, that this spirit is indeed a stream of brimstone, of devouring flames, of anguish and torment, and your bodies and spirits will burn unquenchably and endlessly while this spirit lasteth in you, until God refine you out of it.

Think with yourselves how soon this bed of filth, shame, and security, into which the devil hath allured you, will be changed into a bed of fire and flame. How soon the devil, who now woos you as a great prince, and gains you as the god of this world, in these counterfeit shapes of false beauty and sweetness, will break forth upon you in his own shape, as he thinks, of endless terrors and horrors; and though God will defeat his thoughts, yet do not you venture to try. You are now so fondly pursuing the joys of the creature, that you can hear and think of nothing else.

But the time will quickly come when all the joys of the creature will vanish in the smoke and fire of the bottomless pit; and the God of this world, who is now pouring out his false loves and filthy lusts into your hearts through all these joys of the creature, will cast off his angelical, his god-like form, and appear in his own form to torment you, until God, which God knows when, will release you and him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The last scripture I shall mention is Rom. v. 20, 21: "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE very face and complexion of this scripture, and much more the inward sense of it, gives me very comfortable assurances of my hypothesis. Every word is here fraught with a great and rich treasure of divine sense and sweetness. I will not enlarge upon this text, but only take notice of four words in it, and leave the ingenuous and candid reader to make the application of it in my stead.

1. The first word, the *law* came in. The Greek word is παρεισηλθεν, the law entered *subintravit*, it came in by the by, in the way, and under something else as subordinate and subservient to it.

The great, the principal, the universal design in the counsel of God, which runs along and spreads itself over all, through all, from eternity, is grace and love. This divine grace and love, is that design from which all things are constituted, to which all things serve, in which God beginneth and endeth all his counsels, all his works, and in which he eternally resteth. In the current and stream of this design, in the course of this contrivance, the law is brought in, together with sin and death, not for their own sakes, but to serve and heighten the chief design, as subservient to it, to set off and heighten the grand divine contrivance of divine love and grace, to be to it like a foil well placed beneath a rich diamond, or as a black ground skilfully laid for a beautiful picture. That comes in like that part in a dramatic poem which we call *Desis*, the tying of the knot; that the other part which we call *Lusis*, the untying of the knot, may be more surprising and delightful.

Sin reigns unto death, but sin and death comes in by the law. The law together with these comes in, in the way and passage of the grand design, which is the reign of free grace, of divine love, by that divine righteousness unto eternal life.

2. The second word is *where*; where sin abounded, grace did superabound. O, what a ground of faith to the most doubting and despairing sinner! O, what a sweet consolation to the most weary and heavey laden soul! O, what a hidden ground of hope, for the greatest, the worst, the most undone sinner is here! No presence, no prevalency or predominancy of any sin can be a bar to the grace of God; yea, rather (bear it who can), great sins are arguments of greater grace. God himself saith, where sin hath abounded, grace hath much more abounded. It is no matter what thou sayest, or any sinner, or what the devil saith against thee and them; God hath said thus, say thou also, here in this soul of mine sin hath abounded; then draw the conclusion in the form of a prayer, and say, be it unto me according to thy word; here in this soul of mine, sin hath abounded, let thy grace much more abound. Thou canst not make this prayer unless the spirit of God help thee. Will not that God, that spirit, which makes this prayer for thee, make it sooner or later for all his poor creatures; for thou couldst not make it without that spirit, nor can they do it without it. So we read, the Psalmist saith: "O thou that hearest the prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." When did you make a prayer that you could call the prayer above all other? I then say that Christ is the prayer for us all, as the Dutch

annotations upon the Bible, do render that text; and so he is sooner or later, the prayer that God makes for us all to him, that he might see the fruit of his sacrifice for all he offered up himself for.

If this text be true that I am upon, it gives us hopes, that wherever sin hath abounded most, grace shall at last, and in God's due season, superabound.

3. And there is the third word in this scripture I would take notice of, grace hath *superabounded*, hath abounded much more; it is a compound word; the simple word signifies to exalt, to excel, to transcend, to abound, to overflow. The word added to it adds a transcendency to that transcendency, a vast admirable super-abounding grace, as one expresseth it, above all measure, above all comparison. The grace of God abounds above all sin, where sin hath most of all abounded, as the waters in the deluge, as one speaks, increased until they covered the tops of the highest mountains. The grace of God abounds above all measure or expression, all conception, all comprehension. It abounds above all things, above all names and thoughts of excellency, or transcendency, until it swallow up all with a most delightful admiration into itself. We have another compound word to this purpose, 1 Tim. i. 14, 15, where the apostle saith, "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me Jesus Christ first might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should come after to believe on him to everlasting life." The grace of God was exceeding abundant, ὑπερπλεόνασε, and I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ might show forth all long-suffering. A first supposes a second, and a second a third, and so on without number; and whom in this case will not God first or last take in? "And I obtained mercy," for a pattern, ὑποτυπωσιν, for a type; as Paul was here typical of the chiefest of sinners that should come after him. God hath in his case provided against the despair of the greatest sinners in all succeeding times. It is as if he had said, let no sinner after my obtaining mercy despair of God's grace.

Who dare? who can set bounds to this unbounded, this unlimited, this uncontrollable, this superabounding grace? If this grace be super-abounded by the creature's sin and misery, how doth this grace demand the glory of super-abounding—and of superabounding where sin hath abounded! If sin super-abounds over this grace;—if this grace leave sin and death reigning over the greatest part of mankind, where is it super-abounding?

Can this ocean of grace run itself dry? Can this sun of grace ever spend all its light? Shall infinite, eternal love ever fail? Shall the wrath and severity of God out-live his love, his grace, his sweetness? Is his wrath greater than his love? Is it not, as hath been said, a servant to it? Shall this wrath set and lie down over the greatest part of the works of his hands? Shall he who commands us "not to be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good," not overcome at last all the evil in us? Sure I am, God can never cease to be good, till he ceases to be God. To this goodness I have faith to resign all things.

4. The fourth word is, *as* sin. Here we have a parallel between the reign of two great kings; "As *sin* hath reigned unto death, even so shall *grace* reign." *As*, here maketh it not a comparison in the proportion and measure of the reign of these two kings; for the foregoing word makes it plain that the kingdom of grace doth transcend the kingdom of sin and death in the height of power and sovereignty beyond all comparison and proportion. The comparison then is in the *certainty* of the reign of this king, *grace* to all its subjects, and then must be over all, unless a greater king can rise up against it and subdue this God and grace.

So certain as the winter in its season lies upon us with its chilling snows and killing frosts, so certain shall the summer, in its season, shine and smile upon us with its golden sky and sunshine, with its garden of roses and fields of corn. The reign of sin hath and doth evidence itself to us, by most effectual proofs and solid arguments in all the powers of our souls and parts of our bodies, and in all things round about us; it hath sealed itself upon us with plain and deep characters of darkness, deformity, confusion, incessant pain, endless cares, and woeful mortality. Let this comfort us, that as certain, in its season, the kingdom of grace shall evidence itself to us, with such divine proofs and glorious demonstrations, that the kingdom of sin shall vanish and be seen no more. The kingdom of grace shall seat itself upon all the powers of our souls—the same parts of our bodies—the same face of things round about us; in the most lively, the most lovely, the most deeply delightful, and most delightfully deep characters of the divine righteousness; with all the ravishing and pure beauties of the divine nature shining in it—with deep and lasting characters of the immortal and eternal life, with all its boundless, endless joys—with the eternal characters of the glorified humanity of Christ—with all his transforming loves and loveliness upon our humanity, making it like his own glorious humanity. The result of this scripture is this: The law came in that sin might abound. Sin reigned unto death; but it never was in the design of God, or in the nature of the law, as the law is in the letter and covenant of works, that righteousness or life should be by the law. No, by the law came in sin, not from any evil in the law, which is good, holy, and spiritual, but through the weakness of the flesh. By the law, sin being come in, is increased and heightened through enmity in the flesh. The law from its own native purity, power and spirituality, discovers, sentences, and condemns sin; so the sinner dies, so sin by the law reigned unto death. But doth that God, whose beauty is holiness, whose essence is love, take pleasure in sin, or in the death

of a sinner! By no means. The law came in that sin might abound, but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

Behold then, the ultimate effect of the law in the event, viz., the super-abounding of grace! See, in the following words: This ultimate effect in the event, to be also the ultimate end in the design; that *as* sin hath reigned unto death, *so* might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.

This then is the ultimate end of the law, of sin, of death, in the eternal design, and in the eternal event,—the super-abounding of grace. Grace is the beginning of the design; and the end of the work, a transcendency of grace. Grace lays the scheme of the laws, of sin and death, that through these darknesses, blacknesses, and contrarieties, it may bring forth itself more triumphantly, with a more transcendent sweetness and glory: that it may swallow up the deformity, the guilt of sin, the terrors of the law, the horrors of death, into the beauties of a divine righteousness, into the joys of an eternal life in the bosom of an eternal love, overflowing all with a superabundant boundless excess. Thus, as hath been said, sin reigns unto death, but sin and death came in by the law. The law, together with these are brought in, in the way and passage to the grand design, which is the reign of free grace, of a divine love, by a divine righteousness, unto eternal life.

In the garden of the divine providences, and the divine works, every root, every principle hath its free scope, and its full force to unfold itself in all its several virtues, forms, and degrees, until it bring forth itself in its last and ripest fruit. Sin reigns unto death.

Thus a divine wisdom and power sets one thing over against another, displaying itself through all variety, that he who cometh after the king immortal and only wise, may find nothing to add to his work. But grace, the incorruptible beauty and purest sweetness of the God-head is the beginning, the way, and the end of the whole work, of the whole design. Thus grace runs all along undefiled, unmixed, irresistible, through all variety and contrariety from the beginning to the end; sweetly, wisely, strongly taking hold of all his works. It bringeth forth itself through all, it giveth measure and weight unto all, it formeth itself upon all, it bindeth up all at last, into one most divine harmony, into one most harmonious image of itself and of the divine essence; it turneth all into itself, as an endless glory to itself.

Who then, that is acquainted with God and knoweth him as he is love, can imagine, that God hath set up mutability, earthliness, a capacity of sinning and dying—that He hath suffered any thing of evil, of sin, of death, to come in upon that which is earthly, frail, and fading, and so leave his creation to be swallowed up and devoured by sin and death? No, he hath permitted all this; but with a design to stamp upon it the image and impression of eternal love and glory—to bring in Jesus Christ, and eternal life by him, in greater pomp and glory, with greater power and force, with greater joy and gladness, with a more transcendent victory and triumph. As sin and death were not brought in at first, so it is as certain they shall not be the end; for grace is the beginning of all—and the end must be grace also.

And now if we stumble at any part of this contrivance, it is because we cannot in one view behold the works of God, from its beginning, in its whole progress, unto its end. If we could in one view behold all his methods, how full of heavenly harmony are they! In what divine order are the links of the golden chain of His contrivance of grace fastened one to another, or within one another! All is love, from the beginning to the end; but it proceeds from the beginning to the end in so divine an order, as makes a pure and incorruptible beauty and majesty to shine forth from the whole, a most heavenly and divine melody to sound from all parts of it, charming and ravishing the pure senses of all holy and heavenly spirits!

I conclude what I have said from this scripture, and on this subject, with a most humble address to God.

THE AUTHOR'S PRAYER.

PARDON me, O my God, if in the contemplation and experience of thy super-abounding grace to myself, I have been transported in my representation of thee beyond thy allowance. I think it impossible to exceed, when I am admiring that grace of thine, which is the highest, the sweetest, the most exalted name of that love which is thyself, and the eternal spring of all loves and loveliness. I presume not to pry into the methods of thy love and thy seasons for the full manifestation of it. How far thy thoughts and ways, which are thy infinite wisdom, do transcend, I know not; but sure I am, they cannot fall short of the limited perfections of thy creatures. Thou hast in thy own first make, given me a nature all disposed to love. Thou hast by thy grace heightened and enlarged that love to all thy offspring, to every thing that bears any image or stamp of thyself upon it. I could not, as I ought to do, love thee, if I did not love thee wherever I find thee. Thou hast commanded me and all thine, to overcome all the evil of this lower world with good. No evil, no injury I have met with in this unkind world, for thy sake, or upon any other account whatsoever, hath yet exceeded my love and forgiveness. Yea, thou hast made it one of my highest pleasures to love and serve enemies. Can I then think any evil in any of thy creatures can over set thy goodness? Thou art the highest example to them of all the goodness thou requirest us to show to one another. I must believe then, thy grace will sooner or later super-abound, wherever sin hath most abounded; 'till I can think a little drop of being, and but one remove from nothing, can excel in goodness that ocean of goodness which hath neither shore, bottom, nor surface. Thou art goodness itself, in the abstract, in its first spring, in its supreme and universal form and spirit. We must believe thee to be infinitely good—to be good without any measure or bound—to be good beyond all expression and conception of all creatures, of men and angels; or we must give over thinking thee to be at all. All the goodness which is every where to be found scattered among the creatures, is sent forth from thee, the fountain, the sea of all goodness. Into this sea of all goodness I deliver myself and all my fellow-creatures. Thou art love, and canst no more cease to be so, than to be thyself. Take thy own methods with us, and submit us to them. Well may we so do, in an assurance that the beginning, the way, and the end of them all is love.

To the inexhaustible fountain of all grace and goodness, from all his creatures, be ascribed all glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen. Hallelujah!

380

THE END.

TEN LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

MR. PAINE,

IN ANSWER TO HIS PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

THE AGE OF REASON:

CONTAINING

SOME CLEAR AND SATISFYING EVIDENCES OF THE TRUTH OF DIVINE REVELATION; AND ESPECIALLY OF THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS.

BY ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

"Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."—*David.*

THIRD EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:
GIHON, FAIRCHILD & Co.
1844.

LETTER TO THE PUBLISHERS.

Messrs. Gihon, Fairchild & Co.,—I send you Mr. Winchester's Ten Letters, addressed to Thomas Paine, in answer to his Pamphlet, entitled, The Age of Reason. This little book is a very rare one,—by far too much so, for one of its intrinsic worth. In all my travels, I have no recollection, that I have ever seen another copy of the same work. Mr. Winchester's Dialogues have been often published, while these letters, though a smaller work, have been long overlooked. Undoubtedly the principal reason of this, which has existed since the multiplication of books in our order, is the very fact, that they have not been known. Formerly, Universalists rarely published any book, except it embraced the then new and interesting topic of vindicating the final salvation of all men. These letters are not of this peculiar character. They go to vindicate Christianity as resting upon the basis of the sacred pages, without calling any aid from sectarian views. The Bible is made by them to speak its own language, and thus to become its own vindicator. While they embrace less philological criticism than Bishop Watson's Apology, addressed to the same Thomas Paine, they abound in a rich fund of plain good sense, most happily adapted to supply the wants of the great mass of a reading community.

What seems to enrich every portion of this little book, in which our author was called to contend with the continued revilings of a scoffer, is the clear tokens of a most kind and conciliatory spirit, that pervades the whole from beginning to end. True, we find occasionally a turn of pleasantry and rebuke that must appear in the light of no small expense to the author of the Age of reason, in the estimation of an enlightened public. Yet, in no instance, do we perceive an uncalled for and cruel reflection, or a mere biting sarcasm.

This little book has long been a resident in the family of my library. I now part with it for a similar motive that the house of Bethuel parted with their sister, Rebekah. Although I do not claim authority to pronounce upon it an equal prophetic blessing, my best wishes for its prosperity strongly mingle in that oriental hyperbole; "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them."

Samuel C. Loveland.

Weston, Vt., Aug. 8, 1843.

ANSWER TO THE AGE OF REASON.

LETTER I.

SIR,—I am very sorry that I have any occasion to take up the pen against such an able writer as you are; but having devoted the principal part of my life to the study, practice, and propagation of that religion, which you are pleased to style "fabulous theology," you must not be surprised at my attempting to vindicate it with the zeal and affection of a lover, who has found more real pleasure therein than in all other things.

If in this great, and to me infinitely important and interesting debate, I should gain any advantage over you, who are so far my superior in writing, it will evidently appear to be owing to the goodness of my cause, and the more extensive knowledge of the Bible that I have attained beyond what you possess. If you had known the Scriptures better, I am persuaded that you would never have attempted to represent them in the ridiculous light that you have done.

As your book, called "The Age of Reason," &c. is wrote in a miscellaneous manner, I have chosen the form of letters to communicate my thoughts to you and the public upon the several subjects therein treated of.

In this first letter I shall endeavour to show, that the ideas of the infinite wisdom, power, goodness and mercy of God, which you profess to learn from the great book of the creation, I am able to learn, even from the New Testament which you treat with so much contempt. And I shall also, in some of these letters, prove (I hope to your satisfaction) that there is abundance more said in the Bible respecting the Deity and his works, than you are willing to allow: for in order to render that book of very little importance, you affect to represent that there is little or nothing in it respecting those subjects, except in the 19th Psalm and some chapters of the book of Job. But I am apt to think, that you would never have had the tenth part of the knowledge of the Divine perfections that you have, if you had never read the Bible; for those who are without the knowledge of that despised book appear, as far as we can learn, to be almost totally ignorant of the true God, his glorious character, and his amiable perfections.

I shall begin with your very extraordinary assertion, given out in these words: "I recollect not a single passage ascribed to the men called Apostles, that conveys any idea of what God is. The only passage that occurs to me, that has any reference to the works of God, by which only his wisdom and power can be known, is related to have been spoken by Jesus Christ, as a remedy against distrustful care: 'Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin.' This however is far inferior to the allusions in Job, and in the 19th Psalm; but it is familiar in idea, and the modesty of the imagery is correspondent to the modesty of the man."

How could you have forgotten that most beautiful and sublime passage in Acts xvii. 24–29, delivered by St. Paul to the Athenians: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needeth any thing, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things: and hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art or man's device." And in the beginning of his epistle to the Romans, he mentions the works of creation, and observes that God may be known thereby, as follows: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse. Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things," &c. Rom. i. 18–23. It is a well known and melancholy fact, that all the nations who have had only the book of creation to read, have been gross idolators, or stupid Atheists; and generally extremely vicious in their morals: their horrid crimes are mentioned by St. Paul in the subsequent part of this chapter, and he shows that God justly "gave them up to uncleanness, because they changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Ver. 24, 25.

In the book of the Revelations which you call a *book of riddles*, there may be found several beautiful expressions relating to God and

His works, as chap. iv. 11: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Chap. xvi. 7. "Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

Chap. xix. 1. "Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God."

Ver. 5, 6. "Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great, Alleluia; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

The Apostle John in his first epistle, gives us the most beautiful idea of what God is, that can possibly be expressed or conceived.

1 John iv. 8. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Ver. 16. "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

And again, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Chap. i. 5.

And the apostle James gives us a number of just ideas concerning God and His perfection in his short epistle.

Chap. i. 5. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

Ver. 13. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man," &c.

Ver. 17. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Ver. 20. "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Ver. 27. "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

In fine, this whole epistle of James is one of the most excellent systems of true religion that can be written; such ideas of God, and such choice morals, such principles of genuine liberty, equality, *the rights of man*, kindness, liberality, the noblest benevolence, threatenings against tyrants and oppressors and encouragements to those who are patient sufferers, &c. &c. of which this epistle is full, might have secured this part of sacred writ at least from the odium you have attempted to pour upon the volume at large; and especially as in this epistle there is no mention of what you call that *gloomy subject of a man dying in agony on a cross*. But finding this book in the Bible, you are determined to despise it among the rest; though had it been written by the brightest genius now on earth, it would have been applauded as a master-piece.

But above all, how could you represent my Lord and Master *Jesus Christ* in such a contemptible point of light, as you have done in the quotation above recited? I will endeavour to clear His character a little in this respect, by citing a specimen a little more at large than you have done, of His noble discourses against distrustful care, and of the divine benevolence exercised towards all His works: and though the generality of my readers would only need that I should refer to the passages, yet as you declare that you keep *no Bible*, I shall transcribe some texts for your conviction and instruction; for if there is any reference to the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in the only passage that occurred to you, as spoken by Jesus Christ, "Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin," what is there in the following discourse! St. Matt. vi. 25–34:

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no (anxious) thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit (or even a hair's breadth) unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore, take no (anxious) thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the (present) day is the evil thereof." And therefore we should not borrow or anticipate the troubles of the following day, for that will always make our load of grief twice as heavy as otherwise it would be.

And again in chap. x. he teaches his disciples the most excellent lessons of contentment, wisdom, innocence, fortitude, resignation, trust in God, patience, resolution, and all the genuine and patriotic virtues that ever adorned the greatest soul of the most renowned heroes. How could you have ever read that chapter without being charmed with it? It is one of the most excellent, animating, and encouraging harangues that ever was made by a general to his soldiers. All low and mean pursuits and passions are here forbidden, such as love of wealth, fame, wordly or sensual pleasure, and that most cowardly passion, the fear of man. He inspires them with that noble contempt of even life itself when it comes in competition with things of vast importance, which all true patriots feel when they boldly meet death for the good of mankind. I can hardly do justice to this most animating discourse, without reciting the whole, which would take up too much

room, and if you kept *a Bible*, I should only refer you to it, with an earnest request that you would read it with serious attention; but as you do not, I will quote a few passages.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Ver. 28–31.

Another discourse of the same nature, delivered before a very large assembly, is recorded by St. Luke, in chap. xii. out of which I shall quote a few passages, for the reason given above.

"And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." Ver. 4–7.

"And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, nor what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." Ver. 22–31.

I should not have recited so great a part of this excellent discourse, being so nearly like that in St. Matthew, vi., did it not evidently appear to be delivered at another time. And perhaps this may obviate another weak objection which you make to the evangelists, because of some small difference in their expressions; for it is very possible, that where there is any considerable difference in their accounts, that they in fact relate different events, or different circumstances of the same event. And thus there is no contradiction at all, but only one mentions something which the other omitted. But make the worst of the affair, and allow for the sake of argument, that there are some few small real differences in their accounts; this would be so far from overthrowing their testimony in the main, that it would rather tend to confirm it; for it is an observation that will strike all reasonable men, that if the four evangelists were impostors, and had contrived together to forge their gospels, they would not have varied one from another in any circumstance. So that the very thing you object to them, is a full proof of their being honest men who had no design to impose upon the world.

I would not wish to weary you with quotations from the New Testament, which you appear so heartily to despise; but there is one passage where Jesus speaks of the boundless goodness of God, and teaches us to imitate him in so beautiful a manner, that it is well worthy of your attention, and at the same time will show what little dependence is to be placed upon you as a writer or teacher of religion, when you so grossly misrepresent the New Testament, as though it scarcely contained a single idea respecting God, his nature, perfections, or works. The passage I allude to is that where our Saviour recommends the noblest and highest virtue, *love* or benevolence to our enemies, and enforces it from the example of our heavenly Father, in the following words. St. Matt. v. 44–48.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust. For if ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," that is, by imitating his conduct in this respect.

I believe you are the first writer against the New Testament that ever pretended its *writings* to be *chiefly controversial*; they have generally allowed it to contain the noblest and completest system of *morals* that ever was exhibited to mankind; which must evidently appear to be the case, even to the most superficial readers. I can scarcely find a chapter of controversy in the whole book; but many chapters wholly filled with the choicest morality, as St. Matt. v. vi. vii. Rom. xii. xiii. Ephes. iv. v. vi. Col. iii. iv. 1 Thess. v. Tit. ii. the whole epistle of James, 1 Pet. ii. iii. besides a great proportion in many other chapters.

I shall quote three or four passages as a little specimen, not for your sake only, but to show to all my readers the amazing beauty of the New Testament in this respect.

When our Lord was on earth, he was asked by a lawyer in these words, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." See St. Matt.

xxii. 36–40, St Mark xii. 28–34, St. Luke x. 25–37.

These passages hold forth the love of God and man as the essence of revealed practical religion, and if you know any thing of the principles of natural religion, you must know them to be essentially the same with these; why then would you reject the Bible, which teaches these principles in the shortest, plainest, most comprehensive and easiest manner? Man has need to be taught his duty in the directest manner possible, for his time on earth is short; and if he must be obliged to read the great book of nature or creation through, and understand it well, in order to learn his duty to God and man, few men will ever be found to have sufficient time, abilities, or means to attain this knowledge. And if a man should spend a thousand ages in the study of the creation, he could find out nothing in practical religion more than he might learn in an hour, by reading in the Bible. Hence the inconceivable advantage of studying the Scriptures, wherein our duty is so plainly revealed.

Another beautiful passage, wherein we are taught how to conduct ourselves infallibly right towards our fellow creatures, at all times, without the least difficulty in point of knowledge; is expressed in these words, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." St. Matt. vii. 12, St. Luke vi. 31. If you were to study astronomy or philosophy for a thousand ages, you could never learn a proper conduct towards your fellow creatures more effectually, than you are taught in this short passage. Here you have a rule which is so short that it will never burden the memory, and so plain that the most simple may understand it, and so easy and pertinent, that it is impossible to mistake in the application of it. You may set the most blind and prejudiced of all judges in the chair, (I mean, *self-love*) and he will give a right verdict in this case; he will tell you how you would wish others to conduct themselves towards you, in all possible circumstances. If this was the only moral precept in all the New Testament, I should esteem it a truly valuable book; but there are several hundreds more, and all worthy of our attention.

There is a passage in St. Paul's epistle to Titus, that for importance and conciseness I never expect to see exceeded: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Titus ii. 11, 12.

How much here is in a little? The favour or *grace of God, bringing* the greatest of all blessings, *salvation*, which is a complete deliverance from the love, reigning power, guilt, pollution, practice and existence of sin, and also a final destruction of sorrow, crying, pain, death, and every evil, which are the consequences of transgression; *to all men*, the whole human race without exception. Glorious news! This grace *teacheth us* a most important lesson, enough to engage us all our lives, *to deny ungodliness*, impiety and profaneness of every kind, *and worldly lusts*, such as intemperance, uncleanness, anger, envy, pride, covetousness, ambition, &c., that we should *live soberly*, this comprehends in one word all the duties we owe to ourselves, such as temperance, charity, meekness, humility, &c., *righteously*, this one word includes all our duty towards mankind, such as doing *justly*, and loving *mercy; and godly*, herein is comprehended that reverence, love, gratitude, worship, and constant obedience that we owe to our great Creator. And all this is ordered to be practised *in this present world*, for the purpose of bringing glory to the name of God, honour to religion, peace to our own minds, and happiness to society.

I shall recite one passage more out of the New Testament, containing a most beautiful comment upon the second table of the law, showing how easily all those important precepts may be observed or fulfilled, by only possessing that amiable disposition, *love*, with which true christianity never fails to inspire the hearts of all its real possessors.

Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." This one paragraph is sufficient to give a candid reader a very high opinion of the excellency of the New Testament, and of the great abilities of the admirable St. Paul, whom you ridicule as the manufacturer of quibbles; though it is well known, that the great Longinus, in his treatise on the sublime, mentions Paul of Tarsus with much respect, as a most accomplished orator.

I must quote a very considerable part of the New Testament, if I would point out all its beauties; but enough has been said to prove that you have done it great injustice, by representing it entirely barren of any one idea of what God is, and as having but one poor reference to any of his works, and as being chiefly controversial. Our readers will judge by the specimen given, what credit is due to your many bold assertions respecting the poverty, absurdity, falsehood, obscenity, cruelty, wickedness, and uncertainty of the Bible, that book which has done more good to mankind than all the other books that ever were written; and this is to me an infallible proof of its truth and inspiration, of which I trust I shall never be ashamed.

I am, with respect, Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

Sir,—as I write in the form of letters, it is no great matter which part of your book I answer first, and which last; I shall therefore take up this letter in proving one of those

grand and most important facts, which you refuse to believe, but of which there is the fullest possible evidence, I mean the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The proof of this will greatly shorten this controversy; for if it can be fairly proved that Jesus arose from the dead, then it will necessarily follow, that the scriptures are true; that Christ is the true Messiah, the Saviour of the world; that his death was of great importance, and shall answer very valuable purposes; and in fine, that the great plan of the redemption of mankind, through the death of Jesus on the cross, which to you appears in such a gloomy and ridiculous light, was a plan of infinite wisdom and goodness. For nothing can be more certain, than that God would never have confirmed falsehood and deception by such an astonishing fact, as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Let this therefore be our present subject.

There are four marks of historical truth, which no falsehood ever had, or in the nature of things can have; and if the resurrection of *Jesus* bears them all, it must be true; and all the ridicule you have treated it with, will fall upon yourself.

The four infallible marks are these:

First, That the things done, or said to be done, are such as the senses of men can judge of.

Secondly, That there be a competent number of faithful witnesses of the things done, or affirmed to be done.

Thirdly, That not only histories be written, but certain outward actions be performed, or certain institutions set up, in remembrance of those facts which have been done: and,

Fourthly, That such institutions commence from the very time when those things took place.

There are many true facts which have not all these marks, but nothing can be false which has them, as must appear evident to all who are capable of reflection. Now this important fact, the resurrection of *Jesus*, has all these four marks of truth: the apostle says, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you," &c. 1 John i. 1–3. In what you call, *the anonymous book of the Acts*, (which by the way was evidently written by the same hand who wrote St. *Luke's* gospel) we read, that *Jesus* "showed himself alive to his apostles by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Acts i–2. This was long enough for them to be fully satisfied, and to have all their doubts removed; and it appears from the accounts given, that they were as slow of belief as any of us should have been; and this, far from weakening their evidence, tends greatly to strengthen it.

And as the resurrection of *Christ* was a thing the senses of men could judge of, (for they could and did see him, hear him speak, handle him, eat and drank with him, in all which things they could not be deceived) so it also had the second mark mentioned above; for there were a competent number of witnesses to whom he appeared, sufficient to prove and authenticate the fact, even though their number should have been no greater than you are willing to allow, eight or nine persons; but St. *Paul* informs us that *Christ was seen of above five hundred brethern at once*, of whom the greater part were alive when he wrote. See 1 Cor. xv. 6. And St. *Peter* says to *Cornelius* and his family, "him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, even us, who did eat and drink with him after he arose from the dead." Acts x. 40, 41.

The witnesses were sufficient to authenticate the fact: and by the same rule that you can overthrow the testimony of so many hundreds, you might that of as many thousands or millions.

The resurrection of *Christ* has the third mark of truth; there were not only histories written of the great event, by those who were eye-witnesses, but there is a perpetual observance of a particular day every week in remembrance of *Christ's* rising from the dead; and most christian nations have yearly observed the feast of Easter for the same purpose. And we are sure that this great fact has the fourth mark of truth, for the weekly observation of that day on which *Jesus* rose, commenced from the very time, and has been observed without intermission ever since.

There are a number of historical facts, that have these four marks of truth, and they are all undoubtedly true; as the beheading of King Charles the first: this was a thing that the senses of men could judge of: it was done openly in the face of the world; histories have been written of it, which though they vary in some circumstances, agree in the main; and an institution is kept up in remembrance of it, even the observation of a fast upon the 30th of January; and this commenced within about twelve years from the time the fact was done, while many were still alive who beheld it with their own eyes.

The restoration of king Charles the second, was another fact of the same nature: the eyes of men could see him when he landed upon the English shore; their ears could hear the acclamations of the multitudes; he came publicly into the kingdom; an institution is to this day kept up in remembrance of his restoration, even the observation of May 29; and this commenced from the very time when the event took place. The facts of the revolution in England, in the time of king William the third, the independence of America, and the late revolution in France, are all facts of the same kind; they were facts that the senses of men could certainly judge of; they were done openly; there are institutions, or the observation of certain days in remembrance of them; and those institutions commenced from the very time when those things took place. Now, if you can overthrow the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, which has all these infallible marks of truth, I can, by the same rule, destroy the evedence of every historical fact that has ever taken place since time began. The

great and learned Dr. *Priestly*, in his sermom on the resurrection of *Christ* (which I would highly recommend to your perusal) observes, that we have much more evidence of that great event, than of any other that ever took place. For it was not only made so plain to the first witnesses of it, that they could not be deceived themselves, but their characters, and the persecutions they were exposed to and suffered on account of their testimony, forbids every idea or possibility of their being impostors. The fact was as fully investigated for nearly three hundred years as it was possible it should be, while it was fresh; and the opposers of it had all the possible power, policy, malice, and every advantage to have the falsehood of it detected; which, if it could have been done, would certainly have been done then; and which detection would immediately have ruined the cause of Christianity forever. But instead of this being the case, the long and severe trial ended in the conviction of the greater part of the inhabitants of the vast Roman empire, and their free and hearty acknowledgment of the truth of the fact, contrary to all their most inveterate prejudices. This is no inconsiderable argument in favour of the certainty of this important event; for what, but the amazing power of truth, could possibly have wrought so great an effect.

For my own part, I think that the existence of Christianity in the world is a full and infallible proof that *Jesus* rose from the dead; which if he had not done, we should scarce ever have heard of him; and his religion could not have existed a year, nor scarcely a week; for the whole depended on his rising from the dead, according to his predictions so frequently delivered to his disciples. For had he failed in that point, none would have ever trusted in him, nor propagated his doctrine in the world; and I am confident that we at this distance of time should never have heard of him.

I had an opportunity when in London, of illustrating this, by an example worthy of notice.—One evening I thus addressed my audience:

"To prove that you could never have heard of *Jesus*, if he had not actually risen from the dead, according to his predictions, I will mention an affair that happened in your own city, and since the beginning of the present century.

"There was a new sect arose about that time, who prophesied and declared that their religion would spread over the whole world in a short time; and in proof of these assertions, gave this sign, that Dr. *Eames*, one of their brethren, who was buried on the 25th of December, should on the 25th of the next May, five months from the time of his burial, between the hours of twelve and six in the afternoon, rise from the dead, burst open his grave, and walk home to his house publicly through the streets of London. And this prediction they published beforehand, as a sign, to which they invited the attention of the people; and they said, 'If this wonder takes place, of which we are fully assured, it will be certainly known that we are the Lord's people.' accordingly on the day, vast numbers flocked to the place where this man was buried, and waited to see him rise, but in vain, for he rose not. The consequence of which was, that the sect immediately fell into contempt, and came to nothing, and Dr. *Eames* was soon forgotten; so that I suppose few of you ever heard of his name. And this would certainly have been the case with *Jesus* and his religion, if he had not truly have risen from the dead."

And I had the satisfaction of learning from a number of my hearers, that they had never heard of Dr. *Eames*, until that evening; although he lived, died, and was buried in their city. Thus it appears to me to be proved beyond all contradiction, that *Christ Jesus* actually rose from the dead. And this fact being true, it will necessarily follow, that the Christian system, which is so *little*, weak, and ridiculous in your esteem, is truly a plan of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness; worthy of the acceptation of all mankind.

This subject is the more important, because this is the turning point between Deists and Christians; here we divide: for if the doctrine of *Christ's* resurrection can be overthrown, then is Christianity a fable; but if it be fairly proved, then the Christian system can be easily maintained against Deism. Here I am willing to rest the merits of the cause, being fully persuaded that the ground is good.

I am, Sir, Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

Sir:—What you have advanced in your book against the ascension of our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, appeared to me on reading, so weak, vague, inconclusive, and so little to the purpose, that I thought at first not to take any notice of it: but lest any should imagine from my not noticing it, that what you had written upon that subject was unanswerable, I concluded upon second thoughts to make some observations upon that important fact.

You, disregarding all facts that do not suit your hypothesis, though ever so well attested, undertake to represent the resurrection and ascension as fictions, told with the "most wretched contrivance," so as to "exceed every thing that went before." But as I have already proved the resurrection to be certainly true, there is but little difficulty in proving the ascention also.

You suppose the resurrection and ascension of *Jesus* not to be true, because all the inhabitants of Jerusalem did not see him arise, and behold him ascend. You say, "the resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon-day, to all Jerusalem at the least. A thing which every body is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal; and as the public visibility of this last related act was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because the

evidence never was given. Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say, *they saw it*, and all the rest of the world are called upon to believe it." Thus you write, and further declare, that you will not believe without ocular and manual demonstration yourself, &c. How unreasonable and impossible is this. Would you have *Christ* to be continually dying, rising, and ascending, before the eyes of every individual, in order that all should have equal evidence of these great facts? Is there no possibility of evidence being so authenticated, and facts so proved, as may warrant the safety of believing them, even to those who in the nature of things could not have seen them with their own eyes? If not, human nature is in a most deplorable situation indeed! The death, resurection, and ascension of *Christ* could happen but once, and therefore but a small part of the human race could see those facts with their own eyes; and if all the people alive at once were to see them, they must be proxies for other generations; some must of necessity give credit to them from the reports of others. And therefore a few honest, upright men, being eye-witnesses of a fact, are as capable of authenticating that fact, and their evidence is as valid, as though millions had beheld it with them.

There was a reason why Jerusalem as a city was not allowed to behold *Christ* after his resurrection, and to see him ascend: for the inhabitants of that unhappy city had, by their rejection of him and his doctrine, moved him to say, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matt. xxiii. 37–39. Luke xiii. 34, 35.

Now if the whole city had seen him after his resurrection, and beheld him ascend, this prophecy of our Saviour would have been null, void, and of none effect; and then you would have had some real ground for objection against Christianity; whereas now it doth not appear that you have any, but what you frame out of your own heart. It was therefore of a million times more consequence that our Lord's words should be all fulfilled, than that you or I should have had our humour pleased, or all Jerusalem should be gratified with that sight, of which the inhabitants in general had rendered themselves unworthy, by their wilfully rejecting the highest moral and even miraculous evidence of the Messiah's mission.

But though Christ himself was not seen by the inhabitants of Jerusalem in general, after the resurrection, yet St. Matthew informs us in his gospel, that "the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, (by which is meant Jerusalem) and appeared unto many." Chap. xxvii 52, 53. So that all these were witnesses of Christ's resurrection, and by them, great proof was given to the citizens in general of the reality of the fact. And as for Christ himself, he remained on earth forty days after his resurrection, and shewed himself many times to his disciples and followers, and at one time to more than five hundred at once; which surely were enough in all reason to authenticate any fact. And when he was going to ascend, he assembled his followers at Jerusalem, and commanded them not to depart from the city till they received the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner, which should inspire them with the gift of tongues, &c. and which would testify that he had entered heaven, and be as full a proof to all that should see this sign, that he had actually ascended, as though they had seen him go up with their own eyes, if not more so. After he had discoursed with them in a friendly manner for some time, he led them out of the city as far as to Bethany or the mount of Olives, which is near two miles distant, on the east of Jerusalem; this was doubtless early in the morning, (as he rose early in the morning from the grave) while the inhabitants of great cities are generally in their beds, locked up in sleep. And if any of them were up, as they had not the least intimation of what was going forward, it is not in the least probable that they should turn their attention towards the mount of Olives, but on the contrary it is likely they would attend to their business; as the earliest risers in cities are generally the most industrious. When Christ had led his disciples as far as this favoured place, to which he shall descend when he comes again, (see Zech. xiv. 4, 5,) "he lifted up his hands and blessed them; and it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and a cloud received him out of their sight, and he was carried up into heaven. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold, two men (or angels in the form of men) stood by them in white apparel; who also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." See St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51. Acts i. 4–11.

After beholding this glorious sight, on a beautiful morning in the month of May, the disciples of our Lord returned to Jerusalem, to wait for the fulfilment of the promise, the gift of the Holy Ghost. How many the company consisted of that beheld him ascend, we are not positively told; but as if on purpose to censure your scoffing sneer of *a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say they saw it*; &c., the sacred historian informs us, that "the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty." Acts i. 15. These all having beheld their Lord ascend, agreed to continue daily together, praying for his promise, spending the time in prayer and other religious exercises. Probably many more saw him ascend, but all these certainly, because they continued together, waiting for the accomplishment of what Christ

had promised them at the time of his ascension.

How different this story appears to me from what it does to you? To you, it appears *in vain to attempt to palliate or disguise this matter.* To me it appears so evidently true and reasonable, as to stand in no need of any palliation whatever. To you, *the story as far as relates to the supernatural part, has every mark of fraud and imposition stamped upon the face of it.* To me, it appears to have every mark of truth that could be desired. I think, and I trust I can prove it to be a true story, and it is evidently told in a very artless, natural manner.

Jesus is related to have predicted his sufferings and resurrection beforehand, at various times, that the scene might become common and familiar to his disciples. Then his death is set forth in the most particular manner, with a vast variety of circumstances, in which a great number of prophecies written many hundreds of years before were exactly accomplished. His burial is then related with the peculiar circumstances attending it. The guards placed at the door of the sepulchre, and for what purpose, at whose request, and by whose order. Then follows the history of the resurrection of Jesus, with many infallible proofs of the same. Many interviews between Christ and his disciples, and several conversations upon the subject are set down. Ten or eleven distinct appearances of Christ are recorded. Forty days he is said to have remained on earth, to instruct and confirm his disciples, and fully to satisfy them of the reality of his resurrection. During this time there seems to have been one general meeting of all his followers and friends, to the number of about five hundred; which it is probable was held by appointment, upon a mountain in Galilee, and was notified beforehand, soon after his resurrection: "He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." St. Mark xvi. 7. Then after various other interviews, with some of his disciples, a general gathering of them that took place at Jerusalem, for the purpose of beholding his ascension; there he conversed with them freely, gave them his last instructions, promised them the gift of the spirit in a miraculous manner; ordered them to abide at Jerusalem till that sign was fulfilled; then he led them out of the city to the mount of Olives, and arriving at its summit, probably before the rising of the sun, he lifted up his hands, and gave them a parting blessing; in the action of which he was parted from them, and ascended a little way in their open view; but in a short time, a cloud received him out of their sight, and they saw him no more. Then bowing their knees, they worshipped him, being now fully convinced of his glorious character; then returning with great joy to Jerusalem, about an hundred and twenty of them continued daily together, waiting for the descent of the Holy Ghost. Now what is there in all this, that has the least appearance of fraud or imposition? I never heard a story in all my life, told more naturally, or in which all the parts better corresponded with each other. But the great and infallible proof of its truth is yet behind; I mean that part of it which relates to the ascension of Jesus; for as to his resurrection from the dead, I have demonstrated the truth of that in a former letter.

On the feast of Pentecost, which was fifty days from the Sabbath that was in the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread, and consequently ten days after our Saviour's ascension, as the disciples were all with one accord in one place, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts ii. 1–4.

Here was a miracle as great and wonderful as the ascension of Christ, and which fully proved that fact; and this was evident to the senses, not only of those who were the immediate subjects of it, but to all the nation of the Jews, then assembled to keep the feast of Pentecost. Here was no possibility of deception or imposture; the Jews that assembled upon this occasion, had been many of them born and brought up among all the nations then known, and perfectly understood the several languages of the world, and therefore could certainly tell whether the apostles spoke them with propriety; which if they did, the miracle was as evident as the sun shining in his strength at noon-day, and was as plainly the immediate work of God, as the creation of the world itself. For that a number of ignorant, illiterate Galileans, the least improved of any of the Jews, should at once be capable of speaking fluently and correctly all the different tongues spoken by the most polished, as well as rudest nations, which they could not have learned in many hundreds of years, must have been as impossible for them to do without the highest inspiration, as to create another universe, and fill it with inhabitants. And this amazing wonder being fully shewn in the presence of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and many thousands of Jews out of all nations, was a proof of Christ's ascension, far more full and satisfactory, than if they had all seen him go up with their own eyes. There can be no room here for debating, to what extent the laws of nature, and the powers of nature and art could possibly go; for every person of *common sense* must know, that for ignorant men in a moment to learn to speak all languages, is absolutely naturally impossible, unless by immediate inspiration. And this event took place, not in an obscure corner of the world, but in the famous city of Jerusalem; not in a private conventicle, but in the public temple, the place of general resort; not only before a few persons, but in the sight and hearing of many thousands; not only before an ignorant rabble, but in the presence of the most devout, learned, and judicious of the nation of the Jews, gathered out of all nations under heaven: not in the night, but in the morning of a public feast day. And this miracle of the gift of tongues, was not only a sign for a day, but lasted many years;

whereby it became as publicly and universally notorious as any thing could be.—And it not only came upon the apostles themselves, but in general upon the first converts to Christianity; not among the Jews only, but the Gentiles also.

This plain state of facts, not only infallibly proves the ascension of Christ to be certain, as this sign took place in confirmation thereof, which it could not if it had not been true; but being open, and in the presence of all, and continuing so long, seemed to give almost precisely, that general evidence which you seem to require. For here was a fact continued for a long time, before many nations and people, in proof of Christ's ascension into heaven; which was itself as great a miracle, and for the extent of it far greater, and capable of being more abundantly investigated, than the ascension itself could be.

If you had considered this matter with any proper attention, you might have spared yourself the labour of asking, and the mortification of betraying your amazing ignorance of the subject on which you have written, in asking, "But how was Jesus Christ to make any thing known to all nations? He could speak but one language, which was Hebrew; and there are in the world several hundred languages. Scarce any two nations speak the same language, or understand each other; and as to translations, every man who knows any thing of languages, knows that it is impossible to translate from one language into another, not only without losing a great part of the original, but frequently of mistaking the sense. It is always necessary, that the means that are to accomplish any end, be equal to the accomplishment of that end, or the end cannot be accomplished. It is in this that the difference between finite and infinite power and wisdom discovers itself. Man frequently fails in accomplishing his end, from a natural inability of power to the purpose, and frequently from the want of wisdom to apply power properly. But it is impossible for infinite wisdom to fail as man faileth. The means it useth are always equal to the end."

Thus you write, as though you never read of the gift of tongues, that greatest and most evident miracle that was ever exhibited: and which was a mean fully adequate to the great purposes of making known the truth to all nations, without the difficulty or uncertainty of translations, mistakes or misapprehensions. But how came you, my friend, to suppose that Christ himself could only speak one language, which was Hebrew? The Hebrew language, as far as I can learn, was never spoken at all by the common people as a living language, after the Babylonish captivity; but Syriac, and even Greek was more generally used. But whatever was the language or languages, spoken at that time, our Saviour excelled, both in manner and matter, all the orators of his age and nation.

"The people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." Matt. vii. 28, 29.

"The common people heard him gladly." Mark xii. 37.

The officers that were sent to take him, were so charmed with his language and sentiments, that they came without him, and being asked by their rulers, "why have ye not brought him?" returned this short but pertinent answer, "never man spake like this man." John vii. 45, 46.

And when he once spake in Nazareth, "all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Luke iv. 22.

And at another time, those who heard him, exclaimed, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John vii. 15.

You seem to take great pleasure in making Jesus appear mean and contemptible upon every occasion. His images, according to your ideas of him, were low, his style mean; he could speak but one language; and you even go so far as to say, *And the probability is, that he could not write;* though St. John, who was rather better acquanted with him than you are, informs us on a certain occasion, that he "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground." John viii. 6, 8; which makes it to me *more than probable* that he could write.

The apostles and first Christians being qualified by having the gift of tongues, and the power of working miracles in the name of Jesus, were well prepared to teach all nations, and to be witnesses of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, both in Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. The astonishing miracle of curing a man of above forty years old, that was lame from his mother's womb, and had never walked, and who was laid daily at the beautiful gate of the temple, to ask alms of the people, by which his face was become familiar to the whole nation, was so notorious, that even the Sadducees, the infidels of that age, the rulers of the people, said in conference among themselves, "What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them is manifest unto all them that dwell at Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it: but that it spread no farther among the people, let us straightly threaten them, that they speak to no man in this name." Acts iv. 16, 17.

These great events, the gift of tongues, and the power of working miracles, were worthy of the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and they accomplished the great design of God; for the first day, three thousand souls were added to the Christian society, and soon after the number was about five thousand; and in a short time, we read, "And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples were multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith." See Acts ii. 41, 47; iv. 4, 21; v. 14; vi. 7; xi. 31: xxi. 20. Thus many thousands of those same Jews who had been witnesses of Christ's sufferings on the cross, within a few weeks after, came to be professors of his religion; which event could not have happened, unless the evidences of his resurrection and ascension had been the most powerful that could have been desired.

I have before proved that Christ arose; if he arose, he also ascended, for he is not now on the earth; though I, and many others expect him soon to return again. The ascension was a thing that the senses of men could judge of; it took place in the sight of at least an hundred and twenty of his followers; the Holy Ghost descended in a perceptible, visible, miraculous manner, and inspired them with the gift of tongues, and gave them the power of working miracles; and these things happened in such a way as to give the fullest evidence of the truth of the fact. I am sure that I need not add any more upon so plain a subject.

I am, Sir, Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

Sir,—You have been a little unfortunate in your choice of the 19th Psalm, as a pure piece of *Deism*, in which you declare that there is not the least allusion to any other book, but the great book of the creation; for the fact, unfortunately for your cause, is, that though there is in this elegant composition, at the beginning of it, a charming allusion to the great book of creation, yet the latter part of it is taken up in recommending that book of revelation, the law of the Lord, which you declare is more like the *word of a demon than of God*, and that there is scarcely any thing in it, which does not merit hatred or contempt. You will soon perceive that the writer of that ancient piece of *Deism*, thought very differently from you; but as you *remember not the prose*, and *keep no Bible*, I will transcribe a part of it for your perusal, and that all may see how totally unfit you are to write against a book, the contents of which you are so little aquainted with.

Psalm xix. 1–11. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." Thus far David, who was the writer of this Psalm, alludes to the great book of creation: but he immediately adds, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." Here is much said in favour of the law of God; and its amazing uses are described as no Deist of the present age would describe them. Much more advantage is here stated to result from the study of the law, testimony, statutes, commandment, and judgments of the Lord, than from the study of the great book of creation; by these the soul is *converted, the simple is made wise, the heart is made to rejoice, the eyes are enlightened*, none of which great effects are ascribed to beholding the works of creation. Wherefore the choice you have made of this Psalm is very much against you, especially as you have so boldly declared, that there was not the least allusion therein to any other book but that of the creation. But the public, after reading this specimen, will be able to judge for themselves, what credit is due to a writer who undertakes to investigate theology, without having even a Bible in his possession, and appears to be so ignorant of its contents.

How could you ever get that strage and mistaken idea into your head, that there is scarcely the least allusion to the works of God, except in some chapters of Job, and the 19th Psalm, when the scriptures so much abound with them, that if I should transcribe them all, I should fill a volume, and be obliged to write out more than a thousand verses? But however your assertions may go down with the ignorant, who have never spent much time in reading the Bible, they appear to all who are acquainted with the sacred pages, just as false, ignorant, and absurd, as an assertion, that there was not above twenty stars in all the sky, and that none of those could possibly be bigger than eggs, would to the most learned and judicious astronomers.

I shall here proceed to quote a few, out of vast numbers of passages, where the works of creation are mentioned and celebrated:

Psalm viii. 1, 3–9: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! thou hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and stars which thou hast ordained: what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou madest him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen; yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."

Psalm xxiv. 1, 2. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods."

Psalm xxxiii. 4–9. "For the word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them with the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he

layeth up the depth in store-houses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him: For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

Psalm lxv. 6–13. "Who by his strength setteth fast the mountains, being girded with power: Who stilleth the noise of the sea, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people: They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid of thy tokens; thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice; thou visitest the earth, and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water; thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it; thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof; thou makest it soft with showers; thou blessest the springing thereof; thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks, the vallies also are covered over with corn: they shout for joy, they also sing."

Psalm xcv. 3–6. "For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.—In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship, and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

Psalm c. 3. "Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

Psalm cii. 25, 26, 27. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

Psalm civ. is exactly such a Psalm as you represented the nineteenth to be: it is wholly filled up with the great works of creation and providence, and would have been far more fit for your purpose than the nineteenth Psalm: but as it is about three times as long as that is, I must only quote a little specimen.

Ver. 24–31. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches: so is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships; there is that leviathan whom thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good; thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust; thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works."

Psalm cxxxvi. 1, 4–9, 25. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. To him who alone doth great wonders; &c. To him that by wisdom made the heavens; &c. To him that stretched out the earth above the waters; &c. To him that made great lights; &c. The sun to rule by day; &c. The moon and stars to rule by night; &c. Who giveth food to all flesh; for his mercy endureth for ever."

Psalm cxlv. 3–9, 10, 15–17. "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, and thy saints shall bless thee. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works."

Psalm cxlvi. 5–9. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God; who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that therein is; who keepeth truth forever; who executeth judgment for the oppressed; who giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoners. The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous. The Lord preserveth the stranger; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down."

Psalm cxlvii. 4–9, 16–18. "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power, his understanding is infinite: who covereth the heavens with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens who cry. He giveth snow like wool, he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word and melteth them: he causeth the winds to blow, and the waters flow."

Psalm cxlviii. 1–13. "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him all his angels: praise ye him all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him all ye stars of light, praise him ye heavens of heavens; and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps; fire and hail; snow and vapour: stormy wind fulfilling his word: mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars;

beasts and all cattle: creeping things, and flying fowl: kings of the earth, and all people: princes, and all judges of the earth: both young men and maidens; old men and children: let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent: his glory is above the earth and heaven."

Psalm cl. 1, 2, 6. "Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Hallelujah."

Isaiah xl. 15, 17, 22, 26, 28. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing: and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding."

Isaiah xlii. 5. "Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it: he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein;" &c.

Isaiah xliv. 24. "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone: that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself."

Isaiah xlv. 12, 18. "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth, and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is none else."

Isaiah xlviii. 13. "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens; when I call upon them, they stand up together."

Isaiah lxiv. 8. "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father: we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."

Jeremiah v. 22, 23, 24. "Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, who have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart, they are revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart, let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth rain, both the former and the latter in his seasons: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest."

Jeremiah x. 6, 7, 11, 12, 13. "Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations! for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee. Thus shall ye say unto them, the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens: He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures."

Jeremiah xiv. 22. "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? Art not thou he, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon thee; for thou hast made all these things."

Jeremiah xxxii. 17. "Ah Lord God! behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth, by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee."

After reading these passages, (consisting of more than an hundred verses) which I have collected only out of three books of the sacred scriptures, and could have added many more out of them alone, our readers will judge for themselves, what they ought to think of the following assertions in your book:

"The account (of the creation) however, is harmless; and this is more than can be said of many other parts of the Bible. When we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it *the word of a demon* than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and for my own part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest every thing that is cruel. We scarcely meet with any thing, a few phrases excepted, but what deserves either our abhorrence, or our contempt, till we come to the miscellaneous parts of the Bible. Almost the only parts in the book called the Bible, that convey to us any idea of God, are some chapters in Job, and the 19th Psalm. I recollect no other. Those parts are true *Deistical* compositions; for they treat of the *Deity* through his works."

The Bible, Mr. *Paine*, appears exactly different to me from what it does to you; and therefore if I was to give advice to men, it would be different from yours, which runs thus, "In fine, do we want to know what God

is? Search not the book called the scripture, which any human hand might make, but the scripture called the creation."

My advice would be, "Whoever would wish to know God, his perfections, character and works, and the way of life and happiness, *search the scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation*, which no human hand could possibly have made; for bad men could never have formed such a book, which condemns them, their principles, works, and ways, in almost every page, and which treats in the sublimest manner of God, and his attributes; and good men would never have attempted to deceive their fellow creatures. So that on all hands, you may be perfectly assured that it cannot be the work of men. And you will find those internal marks as you read, that will prove it not to be the *word of a demon*, but the book of God, which if you read, experience, and practice, you cannot fail of being holy here, and happy hereafter."

As the sky appears full of stars, so the scriptures are full of passages relating to God, his attributes, perfections, character, works and ways; his wisdom, power, goodness, love, mercy, grace and truth are all plainly revealed therein. And therefore your assertions are about as absurd as mine would be if I should assert, contrary to *reason* and *common sense*, that there is neither fish in the sea, beasts on the land, fowls in the air, men on earth, nor sun, moon, planets, nor stars in the firmament above us.

I am with respect, Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Sir:—I am sorry to find that you are determined not to receive the Bible as your rule of faith, even though it should appear ever so worthy of attention. Your words are these, "Did the book called the Bible, excel in purity of ideas and expression, all the books that are now extant in the world, I would not take it for my rule of faith, as being the word of God; because the possibility would nevertheless exist of my being imposed upon. But when I see throughout the greatest part of this book, scarcely any thing but a history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales, I cannot dishonour my Creator by calling it by his name."

Any person that had never read the Bible, that should happen to read your account of it, believing you to be a man of sense, and that had a regard for truth, would imagine it to be a very weak, senseless, absurd, ridiculous, and wicked performance, not fit to be read, much less to be regarded. A book containing scarcely a single hint respecting the great Creator, his perfections, or works. But as it appears to me, precisely in the contrary light, I shall attempt to confute some of the slanders you have uttered against this most valuable of all books.

There are a thousand beauties in the Bible, and the more these are examined, the brighter they shine. And I do not know a more effectual way to refute what you have written against that book, than to bring forth out of its treasures, some of those sublime truths which are therein revealed.

The perfections of the Diety fill up a very considerable part of that sacred volume; therein we read of his eternity, self-existence, self-sufficience, independence, immensity, majesty, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, unchangeableness, holiness, goodness, justice, truth, &c.

It would be an amazing piece of work to collect and transcribe all the passages of scripture that refer to God and his perfections. In the Hebrew original he has ten names, which are all highly expressive of his being, perfections, or character. As *El, Eloi, Eloaim, El-shaddai, El-sabbaoth, Ehejah, Jah, Jehovah*, and *Adonia*. The great name Jehovah, which signifies, *the being who is, who was, and shall be, and the causer of being*, containing the past, present, and future tense, is said to be mentioned in the Hebrew Bible more than four thousand times, besides all the other names, some of which are frequently used. Judge then whether the Christian system of faith, which takes in the whole Bible, approaches quite so near to Atheism, as you imagine! You say, "as to the Christian system of faith, it appears to me as a species of Atheism, a sort of religious denial of God. It is a compound made up of manism, with but little Deism, and is as near to Atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his Maker, an opaque body, which it calls, a Redeemer; as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun, and it produces by this means, a religious or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orb of reason into the shade."

But I shall easily confute the idea of the Bible (which is the Christian system of faith) being a species of Atheism, by bringing forth a specimen of what it teaches respecting God, and his perfections. And as to what you say of the Redeemer eclipsing the divine character, we Christians believe, know, and experience the direct reverse. We can say with St. Paul, "for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. iv. 6. "Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," &c. Heb. i. 3. And St. John speaks of Christ as "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." St. John i. 9. And says, "the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Ver. 14. And Jesus himself (whom you allow to be a *virtuous and amiable man*, and therefore certainly would not lie) said, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." St. John viii. 12. And again, "as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." John ix. 5. And again, "Yet a little while is the light with you: (meaning himself) walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light,

believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." St. John xii. 35, 36, 46. From all which you see, that neither Christ nor his apostles imagined that he came to be a dark body between man and his Maker. But I am afraid we must be obliged to rank you (notwithstanding your great political knowledge with them) "that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." Isaiah v. 20, 21.

For my own part, I find myself so sinful, ignorant, and weak, that I rejoice to have a mediator between the pure and holy God and me; one who can instruct me, and can introduce me into the presence of God. And if the mediator, or days man, be both God and man in one person, (as I believe) I think it is all the better; for in that case, he knows the mind of God perfectly, and the wants and weakness of man, and can lay his hands on both parties. I am not ashamed to own, that this view of the mediatorial plan, appears in my sight, highly reasonable and proper, and is to me a source of great joy and comfort. If you call this a *shade*, I can say that "I sat down under his shadow with great delight; and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

This man whom you despise, is to me "as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Isaiah xxxii. 2. That is, he is every thing to my soul that it needs, either for safety, comfort, health or refreshment. For thou (O Lord) hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." Isaiah xxv. 4. A shadow to screen from the burning heat of the sun in summer, or in sultry climes, is sometimes a very desirable refreshment; and in this sense I am willing to allow, that Christ is compared to the most refreshing shade. And I can heartily pray with David, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings." Psalm lxi. 2–4.

But in order further to evince, that the Christian system of faith, or the Bible, is not *a species of Atheism*, I shall quote a few passages which speak of the divine perfections. When Moses asked God what his name was, that he might tell the children of Israel, God informed him that his name was EHEJAH; which signifies, I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE. See the Hebrew text of Exod. iii. 14. Only the Great First cause could say, I WILL BE. He is therefore, self-existent and independent.

Exod. vi. 2, 3. "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am JEHOVAH: and I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of *El-shaddai*, or God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known unto them."

If you had known any thing of the Hebrew language, and had considered the vast import of this great and dreadful, yet glorious name JEHOVAH, which is mentioned so many thousand times in the original Scriptures, and which I have before explained, I can hardly think that you would have represented the Bible as a book leading to *Atheism*. For whenever the word JEHOVAH occurs, it is as much as though it was said, *The Great Supreme Being, who is, was, and shall be, the cause of being:* and it is evident, that where this idea is kept in view, there cannot be the smallest tendency towards Atheism. But the Christian system of faith is founded upon this, and keeps it constantly in sight. Therefore Christianity is not even an approximation to Atheism.

When God gave his law from Mount Sinai, he enforced the second commandment with these words, "For I JEHOVAH thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;" mind, *them that hate me*. This clause you left out, and then said, "It is however necessary to except the declaration that says, that God *visits the sins of the fathers upon the children*. It is contrary to every principle of moral justice.

Is it not contrary to both truth and moral justice for you to leave out the character of those children upon whom God visits the iniquity of their fathers, even those *who hate their Creator*, and then reprobate one of the most righteous declarations that ever were made? If you had ever read with the least attention the 18th chapter of Ezekiel, you would have the satisfaction of finding that God never meant to visit the sins of wicked parents upon virtuous children. For he there declares, that if a son "seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth and doeth not the like, but hath executed my judgments, and walked in my statutes: he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live." But that God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation *of them that hate him*, is evident to a demonstration even in the *French Revolution:* for the dreadful crimes of the barbarous Louis XIV. especially his bloody persecutions against the innocent Protestants, perpetrated through the instigation of the wicked priests of that age, have been evidently visited upon his descendents, and the priests and nobles of the late kingdom of France. For it does not appear from any thing that I have seen, that their own personal crimes have comparatively deserved such severe retaliation as they have met with; but as they continued to approve in some measure of the deeds of their fathers, and did not repent, and change their lives, God, after giving them a long space for repentance, hath at last made inquisition for innocent blood, and hath evidently visited their fathers' iniquities upon them. And who may charge him with injustice? He will go on to fulfil his threatenings, whatever you or any other may object to

their *moral justice*. But it is certain that no injustice is found with him: for "Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face." Psalm lxxxix. 13, 14.

Since then we may see with our eyes, the awful visitations of God upon this generation, far beyond, in a comparative light, what their own iniquities have deserved, (for they never shed such torrents of innocent blood themselves, but their fathers did) and as we know that God is just, and this is evidently his work, and it is plain that he is now visiting the sins of their fathers upon them, we must conclude that the awful declaration made so long ago is just. And as we see it punctually fulfilled to this day, it will infallibly prove that it was made by God himself, since he continues to execute it. And thus we have a powerful evidence of the truth of the Scripture, the divine legation of Moses, the authenticity of his mission, &c. from that very declaration by which you meant to overthrow the whole, by excepting against it as *contrary to every principle of moral justice*. And thus your most powerful weapons are turned against your cause. For no weapon formed against God's truth shall prosper: and every tongue that shall rise up to censure, judge, and condemn divine revelation, shall be self-condemned: "So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing." Psalm lxiv. 8, 9.

Exod. xxxiv. 5–7. "And JEHOVAH descended in a cloud, and stood with him (Moses) there, and proclaimed the name of JEHOVAH. And JEHOVAH passed by before him and proclaimed JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation."

In this passage, besides the names of God and several of his divine perfections, we are informed of something which the great book of creation could never have taught us if we had studied it a thousand years, and yet it was of vast importance that we should be informed of it. And that is, that God could pardon iniquity, transgression, and sin, or as the Hebrew words more properly might be rendered crookedness or perverseness, rebellion and missing the mark. This is what reason, unenlightened by revelation, could never have obtained; as is evident by all the heathen philosophers, those great and good men among the heathen, who remained utterly at a loss in this important matter. They clearly saw that men had sinned, and were not in the state in which God made the human species at first; but whether or not it was possible for man to be brought again into his Maker's favour, they could not determine. So that if the books of Moses had only this one good passage in them, we that are sinners would have abundant reason to bless God for this divine revelation, which only he could possibly have given; for none could ever have known it, unless he had revealed it.

Levit. xix. 2. "Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy."

Deut. iv. 39. "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that JEHOVAH he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else."

Deut. vi. 4, 5. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Deut. vii. 9, 10. "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him to a thousand generations. And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them; he will not be slack to him that hateth him; he will repay him to his face."

Deut. x. 12–18. "And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, who regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment."

In all these passages, and many more of the same kind, with which the books of Moses abound, the character of God is drawn in the sublimest manner, such as at first could only be done by divine revelation All this does not in the least tend to Atheism, nor do these passages *merit either our hatred or contempt*. But what does that man merit who uses his popular talents to render divine revelation ridiculous, and teaches men to despise the great things of God's law, and would intimate that the Christian system is much the same as Atheism, though it is well known to contain all the pure principles of Deism, and many excellent things in which Deism is deficient?

I could easily multiply passages out of the law of Moses, that set forth the character of God, and his perfections, in the most glorious and amiable point of light; and I beg such of my readers as are not acquainted with the Bible, not to think that in any instance I have exhausted those treasures that are more valuable than mountains of gold and rocks of diamonds; for I have but given a specimen. I should make this collection of scriptures much larger, but for fear of swelling the work too much; and I should not have made it so large, if I could have thought of any other way to confute the assertions you have made, That the scriptures, except Job, and the 19th Psalm, contain little or nothing respecting the

Deity and his works; for if I had asserted on the other hand that they abounded with lofty descriptions of the divine perfections, and yet had brought little or no proof from the writings themselves, there would only have been your assertions on one side, and mine on the other. And this obliges me to have recourse to that book which you so much despise, in which I find the divine perfections abundantly celebrated.

The *omniscience* and *omnipresence* of God are gloriously represented in Psalm cxxxix. 1–12. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compasseth my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is high, that I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me: even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

The majesty, immensity, and infinite greatness of God, are strikingly set forth in Isaiah xl. several passages of which I quoted in my last letter, when speaking of his wonderful works, and therefore shall not repeat them here.

The unchangeableness or *immutability* of God, is declared in various scriptures, as Numbers xxiii. 19. "God is not a man that he should lie; nor the son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall not he make it good?"

1 Sam. xv. 29. "And also the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man that he should repent."

Mal. iii. 6. "For I am JEHOVAH, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."

It is necessary here to notice, that though God has not in his nature or essence the smallest variation, or so much as the shadow of a turning, being unvariably wise, good, powerful, just, &c. yet in his dispensations towards his creatures, there are frequent apparent changes, as the sun, though immoveably fixt in the centre of our system, appears to rise and set every day, and to alter its position from North to South, and from South to North, but this apparent variation does not puzzle any experienced astronomer; so neither will those passages, that speak after the manner of men, of God's repenting, &c. stumble any that are well acquainted with the scriptures. For it is evident from the nature of things, that the Deity must appear to man according to the condition in which man stands towards his Great Creator. And thus it is said in the scripture, "With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; and with the upright man, thou wilt shew thyself upright: with the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavory." 2 Samuel xxii. 26, 27.

It is the fixt and unchangeable intention of God to alter or vary his dispensations towards the children of men, as they alter their conduct towards him. And this, far from being a blemish, is a beauty in the divine government. The following is the just, good, and unalterable rule, which he has laid down in this case. Jer. xviii. 7–10. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them."

The characters of God take up so great a part of the Bible, that time would fail me to quote all the passages wherein his perfections are mentioned; but enough have been cited, to shew that you have unhappily written upon a subject that you do not understand; and have taken much pains to confute that, of which it appears you are in a great measure ignorant, or you never could have imagined, that the system of Christianity, which comprehends the whole Bible, was *as near to Atheism, as twilight is to darkness*. Which is one of the most extraordinary assertions that I ever heard.

I am, Sir, Yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

SIR:—In this letter I shall attack your strong fort, which if you could defend, you would be able to do something against revealed religion; but I trust to make it appear, that your assertions are inconclusive and groundless. You suppose that no one is under obligation to believe in divine revelation, except only the identical persons to whom it was made, however well attested it be. This is about the same as though I should assert, that no one is under an obligation so much as to believe the laws of their country to be genuine, still less so to obey them, except only those persons who were actually present when they were passed. And what strange confusion would be the consequence of such an assertion being received! There would be no faith, no confidence in the best government, no obedience, nor the least good order. All the inhabitants of the whole continent, men, women, and children, must assemble from year to year at the seat of government, and must be actually present at the passing of the laws; and then,

as the company would be so large, some that stood near must tell others, and so it would be hearsay to the greater part still.

But I venture to assert, contrary to you, that revelation may be as certain to those who receive it from others, as to those who have it immediately from God, if those persons to whom it was first made, can give full and certain proof to others, that they have so received it, by working plain, evident, and undoubted miracles in confirmation of the same. And in this case, those who behold the miracles, have much stronger evidences of the revelation, than bare *hearsay*, though there are many persons of such eminently good characters, that there would be no great risk in believing a thing which they should affirm that they saw and heard. But undeniable miracles wrought in proof of the revelation given, make the matter just as certain to all that see them, as though the revelation had been communicated to each of them in particular. And thus the full evidence is immediately transferred from one to the multitude. And it would be lamentable indeed, if human nature was so sunk down, that there could be no possible way of authenticating facts from age to age.

Moses, Jesus, and his apostles, all wrought many public and undeniable miracles in proof of the doctrine they taught, so that it is very unfair to pretend, that we are under no obligation to believe the revelations given to them, under a notion that they were not given to us, when we have full and undoubted proof of their being truly divine revelations, and given by God with a full intention of their being communicated to us, and for our benefit.

But your representation of the giving of the law, is so false, that I must conclude you either really or pretendedly ignorant of the history of it, and it is most charitable to believe the former; but at any rate, I shall endeavour to correct your account of the matter, by the scripture.

You say, "When Moses told the children of Israel, that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hand of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it, than some historian telling me so. The commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity within them. They contain some good moral precepts, such as any man qualified to be a law-giver or legislator, could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention."

Surprising! Have you forgot, or did you never notice, that the ten commandments, which were afterwards written upon two tables of stone, were delivered immediately by God himself from mount Sinai, to the whole congregation? You surely did not mean to misrepresent this matter! The account of the giving of the law from mount Sinai, is the most particular that can be conceived. It was notified to the congregation three days beforehand, and the people were ordered to prepare for the grand solemnities of the third day. They were ordered to set bounds round the mount, that neither man nor beast might approach within a certain distance.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever."

"And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet waxed exceeding loud; so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a great furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." Here could be no deception, nor possibility of mistake: all the people saw and heard for themselves. "And God spake all these words, and said, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me," &c. Thus God himself delivered the ten commandments from Sinai's top, with a loud voice, so that all the people heard them with their own ears. If you had considered this, you would not I think, have spoken so lightly of these commandments as you have done. Here then was revelation made to all the people, not *second hand*, nor *hearsay*; and there is no doubt but they might have heard the whole of the body of laws which God gave to Moses, but it was their own choice to receive the remainder from the mouth of Moses, and not immediately from God. "And all the people saw and heard the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." See Exod. xix. xx. This great event fully proved that God could make a revelation of his mind and will to men. And this was a revelation according to your own mind, made to all the people. And the credentials of Moses were fully then authenticated by God himself; and the people entreated him to be a mediator between God and them, and they all solemnly promised to hear, believe and obey him. And therefore, when Moses afterwards brought the ten commandments written upon two tables of stone, and told them that he received them from the hand of God, they were under the highest obligation *to believe him*, directly contrary to your assertion! For, first, they had heard the very same words, pronounced by the divine voice out of the midst of the fire; and secondly, they had desired Moses to receive the words from God, and to speak to them; and they had solemnly promised to believe and obey him. So that it was a thing of their own choice; and therefore your saying, that *they were not obliged to be-*

lieve him, when they had covenanted so to do, tends as much to the destruction of all good order and free government, as it does to the overthrow of religion. Dangerous politics these! not worthy of the name of Common Sense, Rights of Man, nor Age of Reason, but worthy to be styled, *falsehood, truce-breaking*, and *anarchy*. My politics have always been, that the plain commands of our Creator, or evident reason, or our own deliberate lawful solemn engagements bind us; as also the laws of our country founded in reason and justice, made by ourselves in person, or our legal representatives. But your present politics set all afloat. Alas, how differently you speak now, from what you did when you wrote Common Sense, wherein you advised that God should be acknowledged king of America, and the Bible solemnly crowned as his law, and the law of our country. But, *how is the gold become dim! and the most fine gold changed!* You must acknowledge that your politics are greatly altered; but I hope my countrymen will not be so weak as to follow you, to the total destruction of all good order and government.

This great event has all the four infallible marks of truth, and therefore it is impossible to be false, (even though we should not be able to prove the inspiration of the whole Bible) for it was such a fact as the senses of men could judge of. They could see the smoke and the fire, and hear the thunderings, the trumpet, the mighty voice, and the words of the law.

The whole congregation of Israel, (about three millions of men, women and children) were eye and ear witnesses of the same. There was an account written of it by Moses himself, and read before all the people; and there was a feast instituted in remembrance of the event, even the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the passover. And this institution took place from that time, and has been constantly observed by the Jews every year, from that season, down to the present period.

"And Moses came and told the people the words of the Lord, and all the judgments, (that is, all which is written in Exod. xxi. xxii. xxiii.) and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, &c. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Exod. xxiv. 3, 4, 7.

Nothing can be more evident than the truth of these facts, and consequently of the certainty of divine revelation: for Moses frequently reminded the people of what their eyes had seen, and their ears had heard, and they never contradicted him; which they would certainly have done, if he had not told them what they knew to be the truth. For they were an unbelieving and disobedient people, and who frequently murmured against him, but never gave the least intimation of his falsifying facts. And his words to them have all the marks of truth and sincerity, for he appeals to their own senses. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart, all the days of thy life: but teach them to thy sons and thy sons' sons; specially the day when thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they might teach their children. And ye came near, and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire, unto the middle of heaven, with darkness, clouds and thick darkness. And the lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments, and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them, in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves: for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves," &c.

"For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord (or Jehovah) he is God, there is none else beside him. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee; and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire." Deut. iv. 9–15, 32, 33, 36.

And in the fifth chapter of the same book, Moses repeats the ten commandments, prefacing them with these words: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord our God made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire. I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount." And then after repeating the ten commandments, he adds, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice, and he added no more; and he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me. And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders, and ye said, Behold, the Lord our

God hath showed us his glory, and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. For, who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God, speaking out of the midst of the fire, (as we have) and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me: and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" Deut. v. 1–5, 22–29.

I make these long quotations from the scriptures for the following reasons:

1. To show that you have greatly misrepresented the Mosaic revelation, or the giving of the law. 2. To make it plain, that divine revelation was given at first to all the congregation: contrary to your insinuations. It is evident that this was a fact, by its having all the marks of truth, and by the constant appeals which Moses made to the people, while they were yet alive, who saw and heard those wonders. 3. To make it plain, that the credentials of Moses were such as admitted of no dispute. 4. That this *hearsay* revelation, as you are pleased to call it, or receiving it from one, the proofs of whose mission were infallible, was what the people deliberately chose as the most preferable method. And consequently, it was divine revelation still, and communicated in the very way which they desired; and which, therefore, they were as much obliged to believe and obey, as though it had been immediately given to each of them, as the law of the ten commands was from Sinai. 5. As you keep no Bible, I quote these passages for your perusal, hoping that it may please God to give you repentance for the many false and shameful assertions that you have made respecting the Bible, which are scattered through all your book, as though it was chiefly filled up with a *history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales:* and that *it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon, than the word of God*, &c. &c. I hope you will at least allow, that these quotations from the books of Moses, to which I could easily add many hundreds more, do not deserve either our abhorrence or contempt. 6. It is only by making such large quotations from the book itself, that I am able fully to refute what you have said against the Bible; for let its voice be only heard, and then all your numerous slanders against it fall to the ground at once.

Hoping that you will think better of these matters, I remain your sincere friend, &c.

LETTER VII.

Sir,—I am glad to find that you allow the possibility of God's making a revelation of his mind and will to men; you say, "No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty, to make such a communication if he pleases." And I, for my part, am apt to think, that (considering not only his power, which you allow, but his wisdom, which is so superior to ours, and also his amazing goodness, and kindness, and the need we stand in of a revelation in order to know him, and our duty towards him, and his purposes concerning us) it is highly probable, and even certain, that he must have made such a revelation long ago. But if a revelation is necessary at all, it is needful for the many, as well as for the few: and therefore it must be given to the multitude immediately, as the ten commandments were given to the Israelites at Sinai; or the revelation must be given to a few, to be divulged to the people at large, for whose benefit it is intended. The first of these methods is attended with so much terror, that most men like the Israelites at Sinai, would choose to receive it in the secondary method. As Elihu said to Job, "Behold, I am according to thy wish, in God's stead; I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee." Job xxxiii. 6, 7.

But in the secondary method, it is necessary that what is proposed as revelation, be either such as God only could make known; or, something so eminently wise, great, and good as to carry its own evidence with it, that it came from God; or, that it be confirmed by evident signs and miracles. Therefore, if a person to whom a revelation be given of God, be able to confirm it by evident and undeniable miracles, it is as much a revelation to the people as to himself, and they have far more than *only his word for it, that it was made to him.* And they are under equal obligation to believe it, as though it was made immediately to themselves; seeing it is intended for their benefit, and confirmed by such numbers of indisputable miracles, as make it of equal certainty, as though it had been given to them by God himself, without any mediator. My readers will observe, that this view of the matter entirely changes the ground, and shows that your representation is false, and calculated to mislead; by declaring that we can have no other possible evidence of divine revelation than the word of the person to whom it was first given. Whereas, both the revelation by Moses, and that by Christ, were confirmed by multitudes of evident miracles, that could not be disputed; which were done before thousands, and were open to the examination of all. And to these miracles, both Moses and our Saviour frequently appeal, even in the presence of those very persons who beheld them with their own eyes. The miracles by which the Mosaic revelation was confirmed, were too evident and certain to admit of a moment's dispute, and had all the marks of real wonders. The ten plagues that were wrought in Egypt, upon Pharaoh

and all his people, were facts of the utmost notoriety. The dividing the Red Sea, and making a way for the great host of Israel, consisting of about three millions of people, with their multitude of beasts and cattle, to pass through in safety, while Pharaoh and his host were everthrown there, was evidently a miracle that nothing short of the almighty power of God could perform, and it was certainly done, and done in the presence of vast numbers of people; who, though they were the most unbelieving people in the world, yet never pretended to dispute this plain matter of fact, which they saw with their own eyes. Their being fed forty years with manna from heaven; supplied with water from the fragment of a flinty rock, in the valley of Rephidim; and the preservation of their garments upon them through all their journey; were three such constant and standing miracles, as were much more than sufficient to confirm the revelation given by Moses. There was no *possibility* of deception in any of these things; for to have made them believe that they went through the sea, when they did not, and fed upon manna forty years, and drank water from the rock, and that their clothes, and even their shoes lasted them all that time; when in reality none of these things took place, requires a faith as much stronger than mine to credit, as the credulity of a modern Deist is greater than that of a Christian; which I suppose is more than a thousand times. For not only must the deception have been a miracle many thousand times greater than the true wonder, but what is worse still, it supposes the God of truth to have exerted his power to deceive his poor creatures; which is an abominable idea, highly insulting to the Majesty of heaven, and impossible to be true.

As I observed, that Moses appealed to the wonders wrought before the eyes of the people, I will produce a specimen.

"And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bond-men in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt, with a mighty hand. And the Lord shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers." Deut. vi. 20–22, 25.

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know: &c. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years.

"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, &c., who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end." Deut. viii. 2–4, 11, 15, 16.

"And know ye this day, for I speak not with your children, which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, and his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm, and his miracles, and his acts which he did in the midst of Egypt, and unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and unto all his land; and what he did unto the army of Egypt, and unto their horses, and to their chariots: how he made the water of the Red Sea to overflow them, as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day: and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came to this place: and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab the son of Reuben; how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel. But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did. Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day," &c. Deut. xi. 2–8.

"And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land: the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink, that ye might know that I am the Lord your God." Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 5, 6.

It appears plain from this evidence, that the chidren of Israel had abundance more than the word of Moses, to prove the truth of divine revelation to them. For all these great signs and miracles certainly happened, or he never would have appealed to the people, as witnesses of their truth and reality; and they could not be deceptions, unless we can suppose three millions of people might be so far deceived for forty years together, as to imagine that they gathered bread from the ground, and drank water from the rock to their full content, and wore the same clothes all that time, without perceiving them decay. If these great things actually happened, it is absolutely certain that they could only be brought about by the power of God; for the utmost extent of human power could do nothing towards feeding so many millions of people, daily, for forty years together, with bread from heaven, and giving them and all their beasts water sufficient for drink, and for all other uses, during the same time, out of a fragment of a flinty rock, and preventing their clothes from waxing old, though constantly worn forty years.

Therefore, if these things all took place, as surely they did; and could only be brought

about by divine and infinite power, as must be confessed by all men of reason; it will then follow, that the Israelites had as full proof of the revelation given by Moses, as though it had been given immediately from God, to each of them in particular, and were under equal obligations to obey it, as though that had been the case. There are also many internal evidences in the Mosaic revelation, which to me are full proofs of its authenticity, but I have not time to insist upon them; nor need I, as what I have already advanced is sufficient.

The revelation by Jesus Christ, was confirmed by many undoubted miracles. He healed the sick, he opened the eyes of the blind, even those who were born blind; he made the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk; he cured the maimed, cleansed the lepers, cast out demons, raised the dead, turned water into wine, fed great multitudes with but little food, and had much more left than when he begun; calmed the winds and seas with his word; walked upon the raging waves, and enabled Peter to do the same; brought large shoals of fish to Peter's net in an instant, when he had been toiling all night, and had taken nothing, &c. These miracles were done openly, before multitudes, and were such as the senses of men could judge of; they were not done in a corner, and had nothing of the appearance of juggling tricks in them. Some of them were often repeated, perhaps upon many thousands of objects, as the healing of the sick, &c., and there could be no deception in them. His greatest enemies acknowledged the reality of his miracles, though they sometimes blasphemously denied the power by which they were evidently wrought. As ignorant as Nicodemus was, he reasoned far better upon the subject of miracles than you do; he reckoned them as some of the highest proofs of a divine mission, while you only reckon them, as *shows, to amuse and make the people stare and wonder.*

He said unto Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." John iii. 2. This was reasoning upon the principles of *common sense;* for nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that God would give any person power to perform real miracles in confirmation of falsehood.

Our Saviour himself appeals to the miracles he wrought, as full proofs of his mission, and of the revelation that he gave; and it will be extremely difficult for you, either to prove that he wrought no real miracles, or that the works he wrought were not full, sufficient, and infallible proofs of that part of divine revelation that came by him. He says, "I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finnish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." St. John v. 36.

And to his disciples he says, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake." St. John xiv. 11.

And elsewhere he says, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my father." St. John xv. 24.

It is true that Christ gave many other proofs of the truth of his mission besides the miracles he wrought, but these of themselves were abundantly sufficient for the purpose. And I am far from thinking that an appeal to undeniable miracles, tends to weaken the evidences of divine revelation, (as you seem to suppose) but rather greatly strengthens, supports, and confirms it; and appears to me, contrary to what it does to you, as the most suitable, short, and easy method that infinite wisdom could possibly take to prove revelation to people in general. For but few of mankind, comparatively, are possest of strong reasoning powers, able at once to judge of the truth of a revelation by its moral fitness: but most are blest with the natural senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, &c., and therefore are as competent judges and witnesses of real miracles, as the most wise, sensible, and learned men on earth. And the lowest degree of reason is sufficient to shew, that whenever undeniable miracles are wrought, they must be wrought by the power of God, and that he would never exert that power to confirm a falsehood; and consequently, that a revelation confirmed by such wonders is fully proved to be genuine. And for this purpose the evangelists who wrote the life of Jesus gave us a small specimen of the miracles which he wrought: as St. John says, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing you might have life through his name." St. John xx. 30, 31.

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest and diligent heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward: how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was afterward confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs, and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will." Heb. ii. 2–4.

The Christian revelation in itself contains such internal evidences of its truth and excellency, as one might indeed think quite sufficient to induce any candid rational mind to receive it; but in a matter of such vast and infinite importance, God hath not barely given us such testimony as might be judged enough to prove it true, but hath, as it were, heaped witness upon witness, line upon line, evidence upon evidence: till there appears to me the highest possible degree of moral certainty, and no room left for even the shadow of a doubt. And in the many different kinds of evidence of the truth of divine revelation, different minds may choose that which is most agreeable to their own peculiar turn and habit of thinking.

Some may be fully satisfied by the excellency of the doctrines; others by the perfection of the system of morality therein taught; some by the life and characters of Christ and his apostles, may feel themselves assured that such men could not impose upon the world; others may be persuaded by the remarkable coincidence between the ancient prophecies, and the events of Christ's birth, life, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, &c., that he was the true Messiah, and consequently that we are under obligations to believe in him. Some may see such a moral fitness in the whole system, as to be fully assured that it came from God; while others may require miracles. There is sufficient evidence in each of these to prove the truth of the Christian revelation; what then is the whole united together! And how great must be their guilt, who reject with disdain, a revelation that has all these and many other marks of its truth and authenticity? I think, we as men, have abundant reason to be glad, both that God has given us divine revelation, and hath stamped it with such infallible marks of truth, that it is impossible that we should be deceived by it, or have the smallest reason to doubt its authenticity.

I am, Sir, Your sincere friend, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Sir,—In my last I showed how divine revelation might be as fully proved to the multitude, as though it had been given to each of them in particular, viz. by such miracles being wrought in confirmation of the same, as were only possible to be done by the power of God; and which reason assures us would never be exerted to confirm falsehood and deception. These miracles must be such as the senses of men could judge of, and they must be done openly; and if this be the case, their evidence is unquestionable.

But how shall we that live so long after, that have not seen the miracles with our own eyes, be assured that the revelation be true? This has been answered before, in the second letter; for if the resurrection of Jesus be true, as is there proved, the truth of his mission and revelation will follow of course. And the certainty of the truth of the miracles may be as easily communicated to the remotest generations, by history and institutions, as any other facts. Besides all which, we have this undeniable advantage, that the internal evidence of what we call divine revelation, is, according to your own rule, fully sufficient to commend it to us. For whatever perfections of God you can discover in the great book of nature, even after ages of strict attention, we can find plainly revealed in the Bible, and be able to learn in few hours; and whatever duties you may be able to learn from the works of creation, whether gratitude towards God, or benevolence towards your fellow-creatures, we are taught in the Scriptures in the shortest, plainest, and directest manner; and may attain the knowledge of with little or no trouble; so that we have that time to practise in, which you must take up in learning. And I may safely challenge you and all your brethren, ever to learn or find out one single perfection in the character of God, or one duty towards him, yourselves, or fellow-creatures, by reading the book of creation, that I cannot find in plain words in the Bible, under all the disadvantages of a translation. And there are several things which the Scriptures teach us, that can never be learned from the book of nature; such as, that the Deity can pardon sin, hath prepared a state of immortality for men, and will raise them from the dead, &c.

But besides all these, and many other proofs that we have of the truth of divine revelation, there is one standing evidence, which is the same to us as the testimony of miracles was to those who saw them performed, at the time when revelation was first given; and that is, the constant and exact fulfilment of prophecy. This has been a standing miracle, in all ages since revelation was committed to writing; prophecies have always been intermixed, and these have been of various lengths; for the prophets did not always *shoot* (according to your assertion) *with a long bow of a thousand years*, but on the contrary, prophesied of some things that were fulfilled in their own time, with the utmost exactness; some were accomplished a little after their death, while many were living who heard the prophecies; and these being so exactly fulfilled, naturally tended to give credit to those that reached farther forward. And those that spake of things a thousand years to come, were fulfilled in the same exact manner; and such as are not yet accomplished, will doubtless, be in like manner, fully justified by their corresponding events.

The prophecies concerning Jesus, were certainly delivered long before his birth, for they were translated into the Greek language, some hundreds of years before he appeared in the world; so that there can be no dispute in that respect; and though they were given forth so long before, and were so various, and some of them so unlikely to be ever accomplished, yet they all met in him in a most surprising manner, too exactly to be the work of chance, and altogether afford an incontestible proof of the truth of divine revelation. I will give a little specimen.

It was prophesied that he should be born in Bethlehem; but until near the time of his birth, there appeared no likelihood of its being fulfilled; for Mary, his mother, dwelt at Nazareth, a city in Galilee, far remote; neither does it appear, from any account we have, that she had any thoughts of going there; but the prophecy could not fail, and therefore Augustus must be filled with a curiosity to know the exact number of his subjects; and to this end he published a decree that all persons without exception must repair to their native places, there to be enrolled on the spot. This decree brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, soon enough for Jesus to be born there, according to the prophecy.

It was foretold of him that he should be of a most mild, pacific, benevolent disposition, should bear the infirmities and sicknesses of the people, and should work miracles for their benefit, &c., and yet that he should be de-

spised, rejected, contemned and abhorred by that nation: which altogether seemed very unlikely, and yet was exactly accomplished, and so remains to this time. For though Jesus was the most amiable of men, and never did the Jews the smallest injury, yet they hate him to this day, far more than the whole train of impostors, who have at different times brought such great disasters on their nation, especially in the reign of Adrian, the Roman emperor, in the second century.

It was foretold of Jesus, that he should be sold for thirty pieces of silver, betrayed by one of his pretended friends, should have his hands and feet pierced, his garments divided by lot, should be mocked and ridiculed, should have vinegar given him to drink, should be numbered with transgressors, should rise from the dead without seeing corruption, and should ascend up to heaven; all these circumstances were exactly fulfilled, according to those histories, which for many reasons could not be cunningly devised fables.

There are several standing prophecies which are so plain, as not to be easily evaded. The case of the Arabians, the descendants of Ishmael, is a most wonderful phenomenon in the history of mankind; and proves the truth of divine revelation. The prophecy that Ishmael should be a *wild man*, that *his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him*, and yet that *he should dwell in the presence of all his brethren*; seemed extremely improbable, yet it has been punctually fulfilled, not only in Ishmael himself, but in his posterity to this day. They live in the wilderness where he was born; they are a kind of wild people; they subsist by rapine, &c., they are enemies to all mankind; and yet they have maintained their natural liberty and independence through all ages. They have never been wholly conquered and subjugated by any power; far less led captive out of their own land. They have, in their turn, been great conquerers, under Mahomet and his successors, and possessed a very extensive empire, but have again returned nearly to their ancient limits: but they never were subdued, though some of the greatest conquerors of the East very seriously attempted to bring them under the yoke of bondage.

Another standing proof of revelation is the existence of the Jews in their present state of dispersion; scattered among all nations yet unmixed with any. They have out-lived all the nations and kingdoms that oppressed and persecuted them of old, and they have, as it were, subsisted by miracle, many ages; having no government, no abiding place, no country, which they can call their own; and being a proverb, a by-word, and a curse among the nations of the earth. He must be blind indeed, that can read the prophecies respecting them in their present situation, and not perceive the most exact coincidence between the predictions and the events.

There are great numbers of prophecies uttered by Moses and the prophets, and by Christ himself, respecting the miseries which have fallen upon the Jews, and their present state, which have been accomplished, and are now accomplishing before our eyes, and that with the utmost degree of exactness. But for a specimen, let any one read but the 26th chapter of Leviticus, and the 28th of Deuteronomy, and see with what an astonishing exactness their whole estate, both prosperous and adverse, was then predicted, more than three thousand years ago. Scarce a circumstance that has ever happened to that nation, but is there foretold. And who but God could have inspired a man to declare, that the people should exist through all ages, and yet should suffer the greatest complication of miseries that ever any nation did since time began? If there was no other proof of the truth and reality of divine revelation but the fulfilment of those prophecies alone, I should look upon it to be quite sufficient. And I am astonished how it is possible for any man, that has ever read the prophetical parts of the Bible, and compared them with ancient and modern history, to have any doubts of the truth of the scriptures. There are the prophecies of the destruction of Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Edom, Moab, Ammon, &c., the present base and contemptible state of Egypt; the rise, progress, decline and destruction of the four empires of the Chaldeans, Medians and Persians, Grecians and Romans, that compared with their exact accomplishment, seem fully sufficient to produce conviction in the most unbelieving mind. I must refer my readers to Bishop Newton's dissertations on the prophecies, where all these subjects are treated of in a most plain and striking manner. It is a work that I have found of great use to me, and I hardly think it possible for a man to read it with candor and attention, and continue an unbeliever in divine revelation.

The present revolution in France, and the total destruction of the names of men, all titles of nobility, and all the religious orders, was an event so plainly foretold even in the book of Revelations, which you call a *book of riddles*, that Mr. Peter Furieu, a Protestant minister, more than an hundred years ago, wrote a book, wherein he positively mentions the present revolution in France, and the total destruction of the names or titles of men, and all the orders of monks, friars, &c., and even fixed the very time when it should take place, only claiming a latitude of ten years, from the year 1780 to the year 1790, and this could hardly require the *ingenuity of posterity to make it point blank*, as you say, for it is much within a *thousand miles of the mark*. And this may serve to shew you, that if the book of Revelations is a *book of riddles* to you, there are those in the world who do understand it, and from this instance it is plain, if there was no other, that its truth and inspiration may be depended upon. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein: for the time is at hand." Rev. i. 3.

I am far from being shaken in my mind respecting Christianity, by the spread of infidelity that has lately taken place; for this itself is an event foretold by Jesus Christ in these words: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth!" St. Luke xviii. 8. Which prophecy, though very unlikely in itself, considering the

vast abundance of evidence in favour of divine revelation, is now fulfilling very fast; and thus even your *Age of Reason*, though written expressly against the scriptures, tends to confirm them. St. Peter speaks also of the infidelity which you and others are endeavouring to propagate, in the following remarkable words: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers are fallen asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," &c. 2 Pet. iii. 3. 4.

And St. Paul describes the wickedness of these ages, in the following striking expressions: "This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their ownselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," &c. 2 Tim. iii. 1-4. So that it appears that both the infidelity and wickedness of our times, were long ago predicted in the scriptures, and therefore afford an argument in favour of divine revelation, drawn from the very means which you take to endeavour to destroy its credit; but all your efforts against it, will be utterly in vain.

Detestable as infidelity in itself appears, being no better than making God a liar, by refusing to believe the record that he has given of his Son, and which he has witnessed to be true, in such a manner, as to render unbelief without excuse: yet as the spread of it in these latter days, was an event foreknown and predicted by Jesus Christ himself, as one of the signs of his near approach, we Christians can behold it in this light without being greatly troubled, or in the least shaken in mind. We are forewarned in the scriptures of these things, and therefore are forearmed against discouragement on this account. And besides, we have the pleasure to see that God has made use of this flood of *infidelity* in France, to destroy *Popery* more effectually in a few years, than by the gentler methods of instructions, &c., it could have been done in several centuries. Thus the prophecies that relate to the destruction of that hierarchy, are accomplishing at the same time, with the predictions of the spread of infidelity, and by that as a principal mean; and so there is a wheel within a wheel. And therefore, while you are thinking to destroy the evidence of divine revelation, you are establishing it beyond dispute, in the minds of all candid, serious, inquiring men.

I have been many years of the opinion, that infidelity would be one of the means of destroying superstition and Popish influence; and God knows how to destroy infidelity in his own time, by the coming and kingdom of Christ.

Had you only attacked the errors and superstitions of the Romish Church, you would have performed a noble service, worthy of yourself, and of the cause of liberty, which I myself love as well as you can; but why attack the sacred scriptures, which have done ten thousand times more to enlighten, reform, civilize, and make men happy, than all the other means that ever were used? You cannot but know that the knowledge of the scriptures, and liberty, have faded or flourished together. You also know, that the Church of Rome hath in all ages, sought to keep the common people ignorant of the scriptures, on purpose to keep them in ignorance and slavery, and attached to superstition; and therefore, in endeavouring to lessen the value of the Bible, and doing all in your power to make people neglect it, you are ignorantly supporting the old system of tyranny and arbitrary government. The book of divine revelation, or the christian system as contained in the Bible, is so far from being inimical to arts, sciences, philosophy, astronomy, &c. that you are compelled against your will to acknowledge, that "The event that served more than any other to break the first link in this long chain of despotic ignorance, is that known by the name of the reformation by Luther. From that time, though it does not appear to have made any part of the intention of Luther, or of those who were called Reformers, the sciences began to revive, and liberality, their natural associate, began to appear." Such a confession as this from an avowed adversary to divine revelation, or the scriptures, is more against your cause than a thousand arguments, and fairly overthrows all that you had before asserted in the most scandalous manner against the christian system, as though it was the real cause of all that ignorance which had abounded in the world, during so many hundred years prior to the reformation. The christian system so far from laying all sciences waste, was itself laid waste; and the Bible being hidden, and hardly known to one in a thousand, a system of tyranny, ignorance and superstition took place; but as soon as the Bible began to be a little read, and understood in some small degree by the common people, then *the first link of the long chain of despotic ignorance* was broken, according to your own account; then *the sciences began to revive; and liberality, their natural associate, began to appear;* and this without any apparent intention of Luther, or the Reformers; all the better; then it will undeniably appear, to be the native tendency of the knowledge of the scriptures, to break the chains of despotic ignorance, to revive sciences, and to cause liberality to appear. This is certainly true, from your own concessions, as well as it appears from constant facts: for in proportion as the scriptures are known, read, studied, admired, and practised by the common people, arts, sciences, liberality, true, civil and religious liberty, with every noble sentiment that can adorn human nature, will flourish and prosper. But where the Bible is hidden from the common people, or they are forbidden to interpret it for themselves, there ignorance, savage barbarity, tyranny and superstition reign: and arts, sciences, and liberality fade away. But then what curious arguments you have brought against the christian system! Exactly the same as if I should say after a very long and severe drought, "That drought

was wholly owing to the rain, and all the barrenness of the ground is to be ascribed to the same cause, however unwilling the lovers of rain may be to believe it; for as soon as the rain began to descend, the grass and vegetables immediately began to spring." What would people think of the man that should argue so in the things of nature? Just what we ought to think of you in spiritual things. Let us once more view this most curious argument against the Bible. *The christian system laid all* the fair fields of science *waste;* for during many hundreds of years, while the Bible was concealed, all sciences faded: but as soon as the reformation began, and the common people got the Bible in their hands, the *long chain of despotic ignorance* was broken, sciences revived, and liberality began to appear; and this as the natural consequence of their perusing the scriptures for themselves. (For this was the great and fundamental principle of the reformation.) For it could not be owing to any thing else, for the Reformers had no particular intention to revive sciences, &c. Therefore the knowledge of the scriptures is destructive to all liberal sciences; as is evident from their flourishing state in all times and places, when and where the Bible is known. Is this Mr. Paine! the author of *Common Sense?* Is this the *Age of Reason?* How is the mighty fallen! Verily, your own tongue is made to fall upon yourself, and God hath in you *made foolish the wisdom of this world.* For while you have been writing against his book, and taking great pains, in attempting to prove, that its direct tendency is to destroy all useful arts and sciences, you have inadvertently quoted a striking fact in the history of the world, which has entirely overthrown all your reasoning. And the greater part of all historical facts will be found upon the same side; and will go to prove, that useful arts and beneficial sciences have generally kept pace with the knowledge of divine revelation. I should not have said so much upon this so very plain a subject, but that the greater part of your book evidently aims to prove christianity inconsistent with all useful arts and sciences, than which nothing can be more false and absurd; the direct contrary being the truth: as is evident from numerous facts, and even from your own account of the reformation.

You have in particular, taken uncommon pains to endeavour to show, that the christian system is inconsistent with the belief of the plurality of worlds: for you say, "To believe that God created a plurality of worlds, at least as numerous as what we call stars, renders the christian system at once little and ridiculous, and scatters it in the mind like feathers in the air. The two beliefs cannot be held together in the same mind; and he who thinks that he believes both, has thought but little of either."

In this paragraph, as in many others of your book, you have written without consideration; and have ruined the cause that you meant to promote. For is it possible, that you should not have known, that Sir Isaac Newton himself, that greatest and most celebrated of astronomers, was a zealous defender of divine revelation? I have seen a treatise that he wrote upon the prophecy of Daniel; and probably he wrote much more upon religious subjects, that I have not seen. Will you say, that *he* had never thought much upon either astronomy or christianity? for it is evident, that he was a firm believer of both. Mr. Derham, that wrote so excellently upon astronomy in the present century, was a divine; so was the late ingenious Mr. Hervey, who wrote contemplations upon the starry heavens, which if you had ever read, you might have seen that one who had certainly thought much of both, more than imagined that he believed both. There are many, to my knowledge, who make divinity their principal study, that are as great lovers of astronomy as yourself, and as firm believers in the plurality of worlds. These have surely thought much upon *one* of the subjects at least, and yet they imagine that they believe both. I myself have thought much upon the christian system, and considerable upon the plurality of worlds, and I never could find, that the belief of the latter, rendered the former *little and ridiculous,* nor does it scatter it in my *mind like feathers in the air;* but produces the contrary effect; it makes me admire the plan of redemption the more. "An undevout astronomer is mad," says the great Dr. Young, author of the Night Thoughts who was himself a believer of both the christian system and astronomy. And we have the pleasure to reckon some of the greatest astronomers, philosophers, poets, statesmen, and profound reasoners in the list of Christians, such names as Bacon, Newton, Boyle, Locke. Addison, Milton, Barrow, Hartley, and I might add many great and honourable names in America, as the late Governor Bowdoin, who, though a great astronomer, and lover of the sciences, yet professed and desired to be an humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. The present governor of Massachusetts, Mr. Adams, is not only a gleat politician, and has been from the beginning of the contest, a steady friend to liberty, but is moreover a Christian; bears that most honourable name; and I hope and trust, most of our excellent rulers in America are of the same stamp; and especially, the great, the highly esteemed, and renowned WASHINGTON; this truly great and good man, this father of his people, is not ashamed of christianity. And I wish I could add to the list, Mr. Thomas Paine, that great political writer, who wrote Common Sense, the Rights of Man, &c.; but alas! his Age of Reason forbids me that pleasure! O had he kept to politics, and not attempted to meddle with religion, until he understoood something about it!

Your objection to christianity would be something specious, if you could, besides proving the plurality of inhabited worlds, prove that the inhabitants of them have sinned, and are miserable as well as we; but until this is done, all that you have said about "the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds under his protection, should leave the care of all the rest, and come to die in one world, because

one man and one woman had eaten an apple;" will go but a very little way towards overthrowing the christian system. For as I firmly believe, that sin and misery are only to be found in this part of the system where we dwell, and know that you cannot prove to the contrary; I cannot but adore my Creator, who sent Jesus Christ, here to live, die, and rise again, to cure the evil which existed no where else but here. I believe that but a small proportion of the creatures formed by the divine hand, ever did or ever will rebel against their Creator; but I am astonished at the greatness of that love and goodness, which chose to restore fallen intelligences, rather than to destroy them; though it is very obvious, even to the weakest reason, that God could have destroyed the whole human race in an instant, by cutting off the first parents of mankind, as soon as they had sinned, before the conception of any of their children; and this he would no doubt have done, if he had not intended to redeem and restore their sons and daughters. We ought never to cast reflections upon our Creator, because he has had so much kindness towards us, and our little world, as to aim at our recovery, rather than at our destruction; and in this view of the matter, the more we believe in the plurality of worlds, the more important and interesting will the christian system appear to us, which discovers a plan of redemption for the fallen inhabitants of our globe, and shows us that our all-wise, infinitely powerful, and gracious Creator, did neither forget nor abandon us, though he had so many millions of worlds under his care and protection, and though we by our sins, had rendered ourselves unworthy of his notice.

So that you cannot but see, that these two great ideas mutually strengthen each other; the great Creator having millions of worlds under his care and protection, yet having such love to all his creatures, that when a part of the inhabitants of one system had rebelled, rather than abandon them to ruin, he sent his Son to redeem and restore them.

If you had considered this subject as you ought, and had read the scriptures with any attention, you need not have asked, "Are we to suppose that every world in the boundless creation, had an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a Redeemer? In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life." No sir, for no part of the universe but this needed restoring, and therefore hither the Saviour came. The scriptures call him the Son, and sometimes the only begotten Son of God, which is his proper distinction; this cannot be irreverently done, for the sacred writings always speak of God and his Christ with the highest possible reverence. No person that believes the scriptures, can for a moment imagine that Christ can ever die a second time; nothing is more expressly contrary to the word of revelation than such a notion.

St. Paul says, "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth he liveth unto God." Rom. vi. 9. 10.

And our Saviour said to St. John, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and death." Rev. i. 18. See also, Heb. ix. 24–28, chap. x. 10–14.

It is therefore plain from the scripture, that Christ could die but once; and as he died on this globe there is not the least reason to conclude that the inhabitants of other systems are such fallen, miserable creatures as we are; and until this be proved, the plan of redemption can never be weakened, far less overthrown by the belief of the plurality of worlds.

I am, in sincerity,
Your Friend and Well-wisher.

LETTER IX.

Sir,—Allowing your representation of the imperfection and change of written and verbal language to be just, and that *it is impossible to translate out of one language into another, not only without losing a great part of the original, but frequently mistaking the sense:* how can you account for the following very astonishing fact, viz. That our English translation under all these disadvantages, should contain in plain clear expressions, all those bright characters of the Deity, which you, after much searching, are able to find in the great and infallible book of the creation? For you have not pointed out one single perfection of God, but what I can find in our translation of the scriptures. I have mentioned this in another place, and I desire it may be particulary noticed; for if this is true, as all attentive readers must perceive, then is not only the truth and authority of the scriptures established by the clear revelation made therein of the characters of God, exactly similar to what may be read in the great book of creation, and which will incontestibly prove, that he that formed the one, dictated the other; but here is your impossibility realized as a fact, a translation that certainly has not lost a great part of the original in this respect; since from this translation, every perfection of God may be learned, that you or any one can learn from the great book of nature. Does the power of God appear in the immensity of the creation? the scriptures abundantly proclaim the same attribute.—"Power belongeth unto God." Psalm lxii. 11.

"Who by his strength setteth fast the mountains, being girded with power." Psalm lxv. 6.

"He ruleth by his power for ever." Psalm lxvi. 7.

"Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake; that he might make his mighty power to be known." Psalm cvi. 8.

"He hath showed his people the power of his works." Psalm cxi. 6.

"Praise him in the firmament of his power." Psalm cl. 1.

"He hath made the earth by his power." Jer. x. 12. li. 15.

"So will we sing and praise thy power." Psalm xxi. 13.

"Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee." Psalm lxvi. 3.

"They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power." Psalm cxlv. 11.

Does his wisdom appear in the beautiful order by which the whole creation is governed? so the scriptures declare the wisdom of Jehovah.

"He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength." Job ix. 4.

"Yet he also is wise, and will not call back his words." Isaiah xxxi. 2.

"Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any; he is mighty in strength and wisdom." Job x. xxvi. 5.

"O Jehovah, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches." Psalm civ. 24.

"To him that by wisdom made the heavens," &c. Psalm cxxxvi. 5.

"The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding he hath established the heavens." Prov. iii. 19.

"He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion." Jer. x. 12. li. 15.

"Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his. He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge unto them that know understanding." Dan. ii. 20, 21.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33.

Do we see the munificence and goodness of God in the abundance with which he fills the earth? we shall find the same in our translation of the scriptures.

"O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever." 1 Chron. xvi. 34. 2. Chron. v. 13. vii. 3. Ezra iii. 11. Psalm c. 5. cvi. 1. cvii. 1. cxviii. 1 and 20. cxxxv. 3, cxxxvi. cxlv. 9.

This last cited passage is, "Jehovah is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." See also Jer. xxxiii. 11. Lam. iii. 25. Nahum i. 7.

The scriptures even in our translation, so abound with express declarations of the goodness of God, that his name in our tongue, *God*, varies but little from the word *good*. So that it is impossible that the book of creation should express this perfection of the Deity more fully than the scriptures do.

Are we able to contemplate the mercy of God, in his not withholding the abundance of his blessings from the unthankful? Turn to the scriptures, even in our translation, and you will find that even the *poor, ignorant, modest Jesus*, as you represent him, speaks of God as sustaining this character in perfection: and invites us to imitate him in our conduct, as I noticed in my first letter. See St. Matt. v. 43–48, St. Luke vi. 27–37.

And as for the declarations of his mercy, they are to be found in such great abundance in the Bible, that I shall not pretend to cite the passages, being more than two hundred and fifty in number, but shall only refer to about forty verses where he is praised because of his mercy for ever, or which endureth for ever. 1 Chron. xvi. 35, 41. 2 Chron. v. 13. vii. 3, 6. xx. 21. Ezra iii. 11. Psalm cvi. 1. cvii. 1. Psalm cxviii. 1–4. Psalm cxxxvi. 1–26. Jer. xxxiii. 11. The mercy and goodness of God are some of those subjects that as a kind of vein run through the whole Bible, and the passages where these declarations are found, are two numerous to be even referred to.

In fine, whatever you can read in the book of creation, respecting the existence of God, and his characters, I can read in the scriptures; and consequently the Bible must be a book of divine revelation, since it certainly contains in the plainest expressions, every declaration that is evident by the glorious works of creation.

The substance of the lecture which you say the Almighty lecturer hath given us in the structure of the universe, "I have made an earth for man to dwell upon, and I have rendered the starry heavens visible, to teach him science and the arts: he can now provide for his own comfort, *and learn from my munificence to all, to be kind to each other;*" may be found in the scriptures. "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." Isaiah xlv. 12.

"I have made the earth, the man, and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power, and by my stretched-out arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me." Jer. xxvii. 5.

"For thus saith the Lord, that created the heavens, God himself, that formed the earth, and made it, he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited; I am Jehovah, and there is none else." Isaiah xlv. 18.

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord." Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2.

The Scriptures abundantly declare God to be the Creator of heaven and earth, men and beasts, and all things; and as for kindness, and love one towards another, many chapters are filled up with hardly any thing else.

To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God; to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, is that true religion, which is recommended in the Scriptures, and which certainly comprehends all the morality which you have ever found taught in the book of creation.

Thus far the book of creation and the book of revelation teach the same things, and cannot be set up in any wise against each other; for I might as well pretend to prove by the Bible, that the creation is not the work of God, as you to prove by the works of God, that the Scriptures were not written by his direction. Therefore, all that you say of the

excellent lessons that may be learned by the works of creation, only confirms the truth of the scriptures where those same lessons are so plainly written, that he that runs may read.

But O how far the sacred writings go beyond any thing that can be pretended to be learnt from the works of creation! This I have just barely hinted before, but being a matter of great importance, I will mention it again. Nothing can be more evident than that mankind in general have been, and are guilty of many sins against their Creator, themselves, and their neighbours. The heathen poets and philosophers, plainly beheld and declared, that man was a weak, sinful, and miserable creature, and that God could never have made him such as he now is; but by what means he came into this miserable state, they could not tell; and were very doubtful whether God could or would pardon the crimes of his creatnres, and restore them to divine favour and happiness. Neither could they tell by the works of nature, nor by their own reason, whether man was to be a subject of immortality or not; all their conclusions on this head, seemed short of assurance; and as for the resurrection of the body, they neither believed nor hoped any such thing. But the scriptures give us the fullest information and assurance upon all these and a great variety of important subjects, that we never could obtain the least knowledge of by the book of creation. In the Bible we learn all that creation can teach us, and a hundred times more, both what God is, and what our duty towards him is; what we ourselves have been, now are, and shall be; what our personal, relative, and social duties are; what we ought to avoid as crimes, and what to practice as virtues. These and many other important questions, may be answered by the scriptures, and by no other book; in this respect, God has *magnified his word above all his name.*

It is plain, from the history of all ages, that those nations that have had only the book of creation to read, have been either stupid Atheists, or gross idolators, and have generally abandoned themselves to most abominable impieties, and the worst of crimes. And the description given by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, of the idolatrous nations of his time, may serve for all periods. After mentioning their idolatry, and their unnatural crimes, he adds, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." Rom. i. 28–31.

Since it appears, that the light of nature and reason, has not been sufficiently strong to prevent or cure these moral disorders of the mind, and to banish darkness and ignorance from the understandings of the children of men; what cause have we to bless God, who has given us the Bible, which has already done a thousand times more towards reforming mankind, enlightening their minds, and making them good members of society, than all other means that ever were used besides. And the influence is but small yet, in comparison to what it shall be hereafter, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the seas. I am willing to let the merit of the book of divine revelation be determined by its effects and consequences upon the hearts, lives, tempers, conversation and conduct of those who truly believe it, and make it their constant rule in all things. I hope you may be an exception, but I never yet knew a professed Deist a moral man; being generally guilty of profanity, drunkenness, passion, pride, uncleanness, or some other scandalous vice; and generally *intolerable bigots*, despisers of all other people, haters of serious men. And if there is ever another persecution against christianity, I think there is nothing more likely, than that the Deists will be the persecutors. The sect of the Sadducees, who denied all the scriptures, except the five books of Moses, denied the existence of angels and spirits, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, were the first, and almost the only persecutors of the Christians among the Jews; and as the Deists of our time are very nearly of their sentiments, and are much upon the increasing hand, the only danger of persecution is from them alone; for I am persuaded, that popery will never raise its head again.

If this little attempt of mine should have any success, I shall no doubt be exposed to the scorn, contempt, and ridicule of that scoffing generation, whose mildest words, when speaking against Jesus and his religion, are more bitter than gall and wormwood, as I have frequently witnessed in my conversation with them; but I trust that I shall soon be far beyond their reach, in that land where the wicked shall cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. And in the mean time, I hope to show that *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ;* not ashamed to believe it as a man, to confess and profess it as a Christian, to preach it as a minister, to contend for it as a soldier, and to suffer for it as a martyr.

I would not be ashamed, 1. Because it is the gospel, good news, glad tidings of great joy. 2. It is true, and admits of full proof that it is so. 3. The gospel is news respecting Christ, who was not ashamed to suffer for me, and I hope never to be ashamed of him before men. 4. The gospel is news of the highest importance. 5. It is of universal concern to all. 6. It is published by the highest authority, even that of God himself; and 7. Because it has evidently changed those men much for the better, who have received and obeyed it.

I cannot but hope, that as you was such a friend to the Bible, when you wrote *Common Sense;* that your *Deism* is but of late date, and that you will be candid enough to read that book once more, attentively, and see if

the evidence of its truth, goodness, and importance, will not be sufficient to make you ashamed of having declared, that *it would be more consistent, that we called it the word of a demon, than the word of God.*

By all that ever I could learn, hear or observe, respecting Deists, their religion is not sufficiently powerful to enable them to pay that homage to their Creator, which some of them confess to be his due, nor to correct those vices in themselves, which they acknowledge, ought not to be practiced, nor to support an uniform character of benevolence towards men in general; and especially, Deism is not capable of giving that satisfaction, comfort, peace, joy, and assurance to its professors as christianity is. I am acquainted with a Christian minister in America, who was, for a number of years, a zealous Deist, and belonged to a club of the same stamp; but he never could find, that Deism could either give him power over his vices, or inward peace and satisfaction of mind: but he thought that perhaps it was from his not attending sufficiently to his religion. The president of the club was a great man, and a mighty adept in Deism, and this man determined to ask, and accordingly did ask him, as a friend, to tell him sincerely, whether his religion did give him full satisfaction or not, and whether he thought Deism capable of giving it to the mind of man? He answered, that it doubtless would, if any could live up to it, but (cursing himself,) said, he could not live up to it, so far as to find any comfort therein. This answer (which I believe might be given by the best of the Deists,) effectually turned the man, and made him resolve to try what satisfaction could be found in christianity, since he could not expect to find any in Deism, as the president of the society himself, could find none, though he had long been a possessor and propagator of those sentiments.

I have often wondered, what could induce Deists, upon their own principles, to be so zealous to propagate their opinions. They would rob us of our hope, joy, comfort, and assurance: and what can they give us in return? Nothing but darkness, doubt, uncertainty, fear, anxiety, faint hopes, and despair. According to some that I have discoursed with, we know nothing of a future state, any more than beasts. Others imagine that we shall be changed into some sort of animals, and so come again into the world. While others declare, that this is our only state of existence, and that we ought now to eat and drink, and enjoy all the delights of which our senses are capable, indulging ourselves in all kinds of lusts, for to-morrow we shall die, and be as though we had never been. While some others, like yourself, *trouble not* themselves *about the manner of future existence.*

You say, "I content myself with believing, even to positive conviction, that the power that gave me existence, is able to continue it in any form and manner that he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears more probable to me, that I shall continue to exist hereafter, than that I should have had existence as I now have before that existence began."

This is one of the most comfortable passages in your book; and yet, O how gloomy and melancholy are your highest hopes, compared to those of a true Christian! O my friend, could you but know the joy and happiness that even I myself feel, in the certain prospects of what divine revelation holds forth, as the portion of believers in a future state, you would not wonder at the earnest wish I have, that you might know and enjoy the same. "We know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. v. 1, 8.

Our Saviour's words afford us more amazing comfort, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." St. John xiv. 2, 3.

"Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself." Phillip. iii. 20, 21.

"For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also, who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we (true believers) who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thess. iv. 14–17.

We have scores of such blessed promises as these in the scriptures, which give us who believe and obey the gospel, full assurance of these three things: first, happiness, rest, and peace immediately after death; second, the resurrection of our bodies to glory and immortality, by Christ at his coming; third, permanent joy, and the highest felicity in his presence, to continue as long as he shall exist. "Because I live, ye shall live also." St. John xiv. 19.

These are the prospects which revelation gives; and which you reject for the uncertain hopes of modern Deism: wiser far would be the man who would exchange the richest pearls and diamonds for common pebbles, and mountains of gold for grains of sand.

Therefore I have three capital objections against Deism, which have been all mentioned in this letter.

I. It gives us but a very small part of the information which we obtain from divine revelation; the Bible alone containing all that

can be learned from the creation, respecting God, his perfections, our duty towards him, ourselves, and mankind, and much more, so as to be a complete rule of faith and practice; especially, Deism gives us no idea respecting the pardon of sin, nor directions how to obtain salvation; but the scriptures give us all the satisfaction upon these important subjects that we could possibly desire.

II. Deism as far as I could ever observe, never changes men for the better, neither makes them pious towards God, nor benevolent towards men; gives them no power over their vices; and does not enable them to practice those personal, relative, and social duties, and exalted virtues, which are the highest ornaments of human nature; but true believers in Christ, who give up themselves to his service, gain the victory over all their lusts, passions and vices, and find, through Christ that strengtheneth them, that they can do all things which he commandeth them, with ease and pleasure. They can even obey from the heart, that most difficult command, *Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you: bless them that curse you, and pray for them who despitefully use you.* If this commandment can be kept, as I know it may, by divine assistance, there can be no difficulty in any of the rest. "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John v. 3.

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Chap. ii. 3, 4.

I would not preach or write in favour of any religion, that did not tend to make men better, as well as wiser; but true christianity doth each of these things.

III. Modern Deism gives us little or no hope of futurity; all is dark, uncertain, gloomy, and mere conjecture; enough to fill men with anxiety, doubt and despair; but revelation gives us the promise of future happiness, the resurrection of our bodies, and endless felicity. And among a vast number of important reasons, for which our Saviour died publicly upon a cross, and rose again, this was one; that he might fully confirm the promises he had given to his followers, of the resurrection to eternal life. This was highly worthy of him, and if he had no other view in dying publicly, (which he had) this would have been sufficient; for he had preached the resurrection from the dead, and a future state of felicity, and therefore, it well became him to suffer, and to enter into his glory; that thereby he might infallibly prove, even to demonstration, the truth of his doctrine, and give the highest assurance to all his followers. Viewed in this light, the death of Christ on the cross, does not seem such a *gloomy subject*, as you would represent it: but connected with his resurrection, one of the most glorious sights that ever was exhibited: the triumph of our Saviour over sin and death, and the certain earnest and proof of our immortal felicity.

I am, with respect, Yours, &c.

LETTER X.

SIR:—In this letter, which I intend shall be the last, I shall just take up a few things in your performance, that as yet I have made no remarks upon, and say a few words upon each, and so draw to a conclusion.

I purposely omitted speaking any thing of the miraculous conception of Christ, until I had proved his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven, as also the truth of divine revelation. But having done this, I have a right upon your own principles, to vindicate the honour of my Saviour, and the virginity of his mother. For I think you seem to allow, that the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, if they had been visible facts, would have given sanction to that which from the nature of things could not have been evident in the same manner; for you say, speaking of the ascension, "And as the public visibility of this last related act was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because the evidence never was given." But I am happy to be able to turn the tables upon you, by reversing your words. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus, being fully proved by many infallible proofs, his miraculous conception and birth cannot be denied, because the evidence was given by those visible facts.

And besides, allowing the scriptures to be true, which I think I have proved, both in the historical and prophetical parts, there may be considerable evidence given of the miraculous conception of Jesus the Messiah.

I shall say what I have upon my mind on this subject, under the four following heads: 1. The possibility of it. 2. Prophecies respecting it. 3. The historical account. 4. Collateral evidence, tending to corroborate it.

I. I hope none will be so foolish and presumptuous, as to deny the possibility of such a conception: for certainly he that made all worlds and all things, and made man of the dust, and breathed into him the breath of lives, and caused him to become a living soul, and made woman of one of the ribs of man, could certainly create this *new thing* in the earth. For as you yourself allow, that "To an almighty power it is no more difficult to make a million of worlds than to make one:" so by the same parity of reasoning, it was no more difficult for him to produce the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus, than any other thing in nature.

When Mary asked the angel, that announced to her, that she should be the mother of the Saviour of the world, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" his answer was enough to satisfy the most doubtful mind, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee; therefore also, that the holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called, the Son of God. And behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she shall also conceive a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible." St. Luke i. 34–37.

This same answer was given, when a

child was promised to Sarah in her old age, and she laughed at the idea, through her unbelief, thinking it impossible, according to the course of nature: "The Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, who am old? Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Gen. xviii. 13, 14. And the same to the prophet Jeremiah, when he thought it strange, that the Lord should order him to buy an inheritance in a land whose inhabitants were just upon the point of being led captive into a far distant country, without the least probability of ever returning to their possessions again; but God said, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there any thing too hard for me?" Jer. xxxii. 27.

And our Saviour said to his disciples, in the case of the amazing difficulty of the rich man's entering into the kingdom of heaven, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Or as another evangelist expresses it, "The things which are impossible with men, are possible with God." See St. Matt. xix. 26; St. Mark x. 27; St. Luke xviii. 27. And this may be given as a sufficient answer in all cases of difficulty; and as you allow that God possesses almighty power, I need not add any thing more to you, to prove the *possibility* of the miraculous conception of Jesus.

II. The prophecies relating to this event, plainly show that his conception was miraculous, and different from that of other men. The first prophecy of a Redeemer, speaks of him as *the seed of the woman*, that should bruise the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15, and why this expression so singular should be used, unless his conception was intended to be different from that of other men, I cannot conceive. It is plain that Eve understood that he who was promised as *the seed of the woman*, was to be divine, as well as human; God, as well as man: for when she brought forth her first-born son, she said, according to the Hebrew original (AISH ATH JEHOVAH) A man, The JEHOVAH.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, we read, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isa. vii. 14.

And if this passage should be excepted against on account of any circumstances, there is one in the prophecy of Jeremiah that cannot be excepted against, nor its force evaded: "How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for JEHOVAH hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man." Jer. xxxi. 22. This was spoken of in the prophetical language and style, as a thing already done, to shew its certainty, and great importance. It is declared to be a new thing in the earth, that never was known before, and that should be entirely singular in its kind, that *a woman should compass a man*. This speaks plainly of the miraculous conception of our Lord, which was indeed *a new thing in the earth*, and was the wonderful work of creating power; and it shall in due time so fix the attention of the most giddy of the human race, that they shall go astray and wander no more. Thus the prophecies being proved genuine, by them having already been fulfilled, a now fulfilling before our eyes, a plainly predicting the miraculous con it will follow that it must certainly If it be said, that the prophecies whic of this great thing are but few; I w swer, that a circumstance once foret certain of being accomplished, as t was mentioned often. The place of birth was but once foretold, yet the knew from that prophecy where he s born. And even the resurrection o that most important event, was on foretold in one passage. And the sa be said of most of the circumstance life and death, and yet they were all p ly fulfilled.

III. The history of this affair is to gularly and circumstantially as a need to be.

There is, first, an account of the co of John the Baptist, when his pare aged; accompanied with prophecies should be the forerunner of the Then in the sixth month of his co the angel Gabriel was sent to a virgi name of Mary, belonging to the hous vid, descended from him by the lin son Nathan: Mary was espoused to a the name of Joseph, descended from t house by the line of Solomon. Th announced to her that she should be ther of the Saviour of mankind, and her doubts of the possibility of it, by ing her of a cause sufficient to pro great an effect; and to confirm her t informs her that Elisabeth had c a son in her old age, though she h barren all her days before, which wa as great a wonder, as that which w mised to Mary; laying it down as a that nothing was impossible with G the hearing of which, the blessed vi signed herself to the disposal of her saying, "Behold the handmaid of th be it unto me according to thy word angel then departed from her: and sh and went into the hill country, to vis beth; their meeting was joyful: th words are recorded, and are so bea their kind, that they have never been Mary abode there in the utmost quiet peac for about three months, seemin no fear nor trouble respecting her si then she returned to her own house; time discovering no anxiety about summation of her marriage, nor tak methods to clear her character; n from disgrace and death. At lengt discovers that she was with child, an ing that it was not by him, intende her away; but being a just and merci and not choosing to disgrace her still less to have her put to death, he ed to dismiss and devorce her as pri possible. "But while he thought things, behold, the angel of the Lord a unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, of David, fear not to take unto thee M wife; for that which is conceived i of the Holy Ghost. And she shall br

a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Joseph being thus fully satisfied, respecting the conception of the divine infant, and being raised from sleep, did as the angel had bidden him, and wedded his espoused wife. And for some time they continued at Nazareth, far from Bethlehem, where the Messiah was to be born; and as I have before observed, did not seem to have the least thoughts of going to that town, from whence the family of David sprang. But the great Augustus now made, or newly enforced a decree, that all his subjects should, by a set time, repair to their native cities or places, there to be enrolled. This caused Joseph and Mary to repair to Bethlehem; but finding the inn full of those who had come upon the same errand, they could not obtain lodging there. The scripture says, they went into the stable, *because there was no room for them in the inn:* though you (affecting to be wise above what is written) say, "Christ's parents were extremely poor, as appears from their not being able to pay for a bed when he was born." But I suppose, most travellers have seen inns at times, so full that they could not obtain a bed, even though they were able to pay for it. And this is especially the case in the eastern countries, where the inns are not provided with beds, for the accommodation of travellers, but they are obliged to carry their bedding with them; so that it was not a *bed*, but *room* in the inn, that Joseph and Mary wanted.

This is the history of the miraculous incarnation, and birth of Jesus, as taken from the accounts given by St. Matthew and St. Luke, at the beginning of their gospels; and it appears to be as fairly and as particularly told as could be desired; and to me it seems to carry every mark of truth and authenticity upon the very face of it.

IV. There are also several circumstances tending to confirm the idea of the miraculous conception.

1. The testimony of Elisabeth, thus expressed, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me! For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

2. The song of Mary herself, which does not sound like the language of a woman who had been guilty of incontinence, and stood exposed to shame and death; but as of one who was fully assured that the conception was miraculous: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty, hath done to me great things; and holy is his name, and his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel," &c.

3. The appearance of the angels to the shepherds, is another strong corroborating proof of the truth of the miraculous conception; for it can hardly be supposed, that the shepherds should have come to seek the babe in the stable and in the manger, unless they had seen a heavenly vision, directing them. Nor can it be imagined, that simple shepherds should have invented such an uncommon story, even if they had known that a poor infant was that night born in a stable in Bethlehem; for what possible end could they have in view? Could they expect riches, honours, or preferments? These they neither desired, nor had reason to hope for. But least of all, can it be thought, that all heaven would be moved to proclaim and celebrate the birth of——, I will not name what. But the birth of Jesus was celebrated in the most glorious manner; therefore was he, as was necessary for him, conceived without sin. The account given by St. Luke is far too grand and animated ever to have been invented by any man, far less by simple shepherds; and therefore they were chosen to be eye and ear witnesses of the joyful scene, that there should not be the smallest room for suspicion. And indeed the whole appears so heavenly, and consequently so natural and consistent, that it carries its own evidence with it. How sublime and ravishing the words of the angel! "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger." While he spake, suddenly he was joined by a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men!" The shepherds having seen and found every circumstance exactly corresponding to what they had been informed of, published these things abroad; or St. Luke would never have dared to put them into his account.

4. Another circumstance of this kind, is the united testimony of Simeon and Anna, who come into the temple, just at the time when Jesus was brought in to be dedicated to God. Simeon was a just and devout man, who was waiting for the consolation of Israel, the coming of the Messiah; and the Spirit of God was upon him; and it had been revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And when the child Jesus was brought in, the good old man took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Anna, a pious widow, who had attended upon the temple service, and had served God in the most devout manner, night and day, for

more than fourscore years, coming in at that time, gave thanks unto the Lord, and spake of him, that is, of Jesus, to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

St. Luke declares that these testimonies were given publicly in the temple before the people, which he never would have dared to assert, thus boldly, if it had not been so; and if the matters were truly so, then is the miraculous conception true.

5. The coming of the wise men from the east to Jerusalem, to seek, find, and adore the infant Saviour, is a wonderful attestation of the same truth. And many others might be added, but I forbear; for, indeed, the evidence is so full and satisfactory, that (allowing the scripture history to be true, and the resurrection and ascension of Jesus to be undeniable facts, which I have before proved) I cannot see with what colour the miraculous conception of our Saviour Jesus Christ can be denied. See St. Matt. i, ii. St. Luke i, ii. which four chapters are chiefly taken up with this important subject, and those matters that stand connected therewith.

As for the account of the creation and fall of man, which you endeavour to render so ridiculous, I shall only observe upon it, that if we reject the short, simple, plain, clear and instructive history given us in the three first chapters of Genesis, we must remain entirely ignorant of things that are highly important and interesting, and of which I should suppose every thinking man would wish to be informed; and I should imagine that a wise and good God would not fail to give us the best possible information upon that h ad. And if this information is not found in the Bible, we must despair of finding it elsewhere; for the oldest writings in the world besides the scriptures, make no pretensions to the antiquity of the writings of Moses. And the accounts they give us of these subjects, are no more to be compared with the scripture account, either for clearness or consistency, than a candle is to the sun for light and brightness.

The many dreadful and horrid reflections that you make upon the sufferings and death of Jesus, and especially npon the doctrine of *redemption through his blood*, might give occasion for much more to be written upon those subjects, than I have written altogether; but as I expect that abler pens than mine will be employed against your *Age of Reason*, I doubt not but some of them will defend that part of the christian system; which I have endeavoured to do in some other of my publications, and I shall be willing to enter the lists with you upon this subject also, if the public appear to desire it.

This one doctrine of the gospel, viz. *salvation through a crucified Redeemer*, is that which St. Paul informs us was in his time, *a stumbling block to the Jews*, and *foolishness to the Greeks*; and so it remains to the *Deists* of these latter ages. But as Christ had many designs in dying on the cross, so a number of them are such as reason itself will not hesitate to approve of; as,

1. That the scriptures of the prophecies, that predicted his sufferings, wounds and death, might be fulfilled: this is the only reason given by the evangelists, in the account they give us of his sufferings. And this was of great importance, for if any of the prophecies had fallen to the ground, the evidence of divine revelation would have been greatly weakened.

2. To confirm his doctrine, by sealing his testimony with his blood.

3. To sympathize in his death with his brethren of the human race, who were subject to death.

4. To set and leave us an example, that we should follow his steps: this is much insisted upon by St. Peter in his first epistle.

5. But especially, that glorious design of the death and resurrection of Christ, which I mentioned in my last letter, is what reason must approve of: for this grand design of *abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light*, was worthy of him; and no greater evidence of its truth could have been reasonably desired, than has been given by his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. And it is abundantly evident by the proofs of these two latter facts, that his designs in suffering death were great, important, and worthy of God. And if you cannot yet bear to look upon all the reasons which the scriptures give for his sufferings, and especially upon that of *redemption through the blood of the cross*, be careful not to reject that event, in which reason may certainly observe the beauty and importance of the five designs mentioned above. And if you should ever come to feel and know your fallen estate, you would then rejoice to believe in that glorious Redeemer who *was wounded for our transgressions*; and *who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* Till then I would wish you to suspend your judgment, and as far as you can approve, but do not condemn what you do not understand.

You have endeavoured by a little ridicule to overthrow the miracle of Jonah's being swallowed by a large fish, and kept alive for sometime there and afterward delivered. *Is this too hard for God?* more than *infinite power* can perform? Some suppose the account not true, because none of those fishes that we commonly call *whales* are found in the Mediterranean; but if such persons knew that the eastern nations are accustomed to call any large fishes, *whales*, and any considerable collection of waters, *seas*, they might spare themselves the folly of such weak remarks. There are fishes enough in the Mediterranean of the shark kind, that have sufficient throats to swallow a man whole, and bellies large enough to hold him. And I believe Almighty power is both able to cause a fish to swallow a man and to preserve the man alive in his belly part of three nights and days, and then to command the fish to bring him so near to the shore as to cast him out upon dry land. If God *can* perform this, it will be hard for you to prove that he *did not*; especially as the prophet by refusing to obey the divine message which he had received, and attempting to avoid the presence of God, or to go so far off that he could not be sent to Nineveh, gave the highest pos-

sible occasion and provocation to the Deity, to exert his power to stop and disappoint Jonah, and yet to preserve him, humble him, and at length, cause him to go and deliver the message that was sent by him to the Ninevites, which was attended with most surprising effects. I can see nothing here ridiculous, or unworthy of God. When I first heard this part of your book read, I said, "If there is any wit in that ridicule, I must acknowledge that I have not enough to see it."

I have frequently heard and read this miracle of Jonah's being swallowed by the fish, ridiculed, denied, or explained away, by infidels, Deists, and even professing Christians; but I never heard any object to, or dispute, or attempt to ridicule those great miracles recorded in the book of Daniel; the preservation of the three men in the fiery furnace, into which they were cast by the command of the king of Babylon, for refusing to bow down to his golden image; and that of Daniel himself in the den of lions, who was cast there for making supplication to JEHOVAH. These were as great miracles as the preservation of Jonah, and the first seems far more astonishing; but then these were done before the kings of Chaldea, and Media and Persia, and in the presence of all their nobles, and many thousands of their subjects; and the peculiar circumstances were such, that a thinking man could about as soon disbelieve the being and perfections of a God, as refuse his assent to the belief of these most wonderful miracles after a serious consideration of the cases, as stated in Dan. iii. and vi. And besides, these miracles occasioned two public decrees or edicts, registered and published through the vast dominions of those kings, stating and attesting these astonishing displays of Almighty power, so publicly made known; and forbidding all their subjects, under pain of death, to speak any thing amiss of such a God, commanding them to tremble and fear before him; since none but he could deliver after such a sort.

But though the account of Jonah had not all those remarkable circumstances to corroborate it, as the above mentioned miracles had; yet those who pay any considerable regard to the person and character of Christ, can have no more doubt of Jonah's being swallowed by a fish, than of any other fact; because the Saviour himself often mentioned it, and alluded to it, which he would not have done, if it had not been true; and therefore in refusing to believe it, the character of Jesus is set at nought. The following quotations are therefore made for the confutation of those who profess to be Christians, and yet join with you in ridiculing this piece of scripture history.

St. Matt. xii. 38–41. "Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's (or fish's) belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas: and behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

St. Matt. xvi. 4. "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

St. Luke xi. 29, 30, 32. "And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man be to this generation. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

So people must either believe the history of Jonah, as related in the scripture, or must judge the Saviour an ignorant person, or an impostor, or that the evangelists assure us, that he said what he did not. For my own part, I shall choose the first, let others do as they will.

The history of Jonah, and his being imprisoned in the belly of the fish, was typical of our Saviour's death and burial; and his coming out alive, was a figure of our Lord's resurrection; consequently those who laugh at the former must reject the latter; and this but ill becomes Christians.

After the many proofs of real miracles, which I have drawn from the scriptures, far more than barely enough to prove divine revelation, it is hardly worth my while to notice what you have said, respecting what you call *the most extraordinary of all things, called miracles, in the New Testament, that of the devil flying away with Jesus Christ, &c.* I do not know that this was ever called a miracle by any author before yourself, and the New Testament does not say that *the devil flew away with Jesus Christ;* there were other methods of taking him from place to place, besides that of flying. But as Jesus suffered himself to be tempted by the prince of the power of the air, he doubtless gave him a fair opportunity of trying all his arts, by which he has so often prevailed over mankind, but by which he could not prevail in the least degree over our Redeemer. Satan tempts mankind without appearing visibly to them, because they have that tinder within them, upon which the sparks of temptations too often light with success; but as the prince of this age, or the devil, hath nothing in Christ, as he says, "The prince of this world (or age) cometh, and hath nothing in me;" St. John xiv. 30: so, doubtless, in order to tempt him, Satan appeared in a visible form, and spake to him in an audible voice, or else I cannot see how he could tempt Christ at all, which he certainly did: for Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. iv. 15.

Some have imagined that the highest pinnacle of the temple was like the spire of a church steeple, and therefore object to the relation on that account, supposing that Christ and Satan could not in person have stood there to-

gether: but the highest pinnacle was only the very lofty battlement, where people might stand, but the height was so great, that I think it is particularly mentioned by Josephus, as enough to cause one's head to turn round or grow giddy to look down.

You think "That the idea of the word of God existing in print, or in writing, or in speech, is inconsistent in itself," &c. This is to represent the Deity as far weaker and more insufficient than man. We can cause our words to exist in speech, writing, or print, as we please; and if we were always to live, and retain our faculties, we could with ease, preserve them free from any material alterations. But to deny our Almighty Creator, the infinitely wise, powerful, and good God, to have sufficient ability to cause his word to be spoken, written, or printed, and to preserve it pure, would in itself, *excite laughter by its absurdity*, did not the *profaneness* and blasphemy of it, excite *detestation*, and shock the serious mind. Who is the author of language? Who taught man at first to write, read and understand? Did not his Creator?

I have already proved that the Bible is the word of God, existing in writing and print: it has been miraculously preserved hitherto, and it will remain to the end of time; and a few errors, whether of copyists, translators, or printers, can no more hinder its being still the word of God, than the errors of the press in the several editions of your *Age of Reason*, make it not to be your production.

It was never possible at any one time, for any material addition, suppression or alteration to be made in the Bible, without being immediately detected; and as for fabricating the whole, which was written by different hands, from Moses down to St. John, during the space of near sixteen hundred years, from the year of the world 2512, the year that Israel came out of Egypt, till the year of our Lord 96, corresponding to the year of the world 4103, it is too absurd to think upon for a moment.

The Bible is therefore, the written existing word of God, in which we cannot be deceived; it proclaimeth his power, it publisheth his wisdom, it manifests his goodness and beneficence. And it teaches us to imitate the moral goodness and beneficence of God towards all his creatures; it forbids revenge, wrath, envy and malice, between man and man: and teaches us to love one another, and to do good to all, even to our enemies, and to be kind, even to useful beasts. It gives us the highest proofs and hopes of immortality that we could even wish for. And thus in every respect, it bears evident marks of its divine original. The nations that have not had the Bible, or that do not read it, most disagree, have most redundancies in their religion, as well as most shocking deficiencies, and are generally idolators; this is strange and unaccountable, if the book of creation is preferable to the Bible to learn true religion from. When the knowledge, belief, love, and practice of the scriptures shall be universal, then shall all men be of one mind; all shall reverence their Creator, and love one another. *The Lord shall be King over all the earth; and there shall be one Lord, and his name one.* An universal religion shall then prevail; *God will turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.* See Zech. xiv. 9; Zeph. iii. 9.

Having noticed the most material objections in your book, against the Christian system, and according to my small abilities, defended divine revelation against the ridicule (for I cannot call it argument) whereby you have sought to overthrow it, I now take my leave of you, and subscribe myself,

Your sincere Friend, &c.

THE END.

THE

EVERLASTING GOSPEL,

COMMANDED TO BE PREACHED BY

JESUS CHRIST, JUDGE OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD,

UNTO ALL CREATURES, (MARK XVI. 15,)

CONCERNING

THE ETERNAL REDEMPTION

FOUND OUT BY HIM, WHEREBY

DEVIL, SIN, HELL AND DEATH

SHALL AT LAST BE ABOLISHED, AND

THE WHOLE CREATION RESTORED

TO ITS PRIMITIVE PURITY:

BEING A TESTIMONY

AGAINST THE PRESENT ANTI-CHRISTIAN WORLD.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN GERMAN

BY PAUL SIEGVOLCK,

[Klein-Nicolai, Georg]

PHILADELPHIA.

GIHON, FAIRCHILD & Co.

1844

TO THE

INFINITE AND EVERLASTING

LOVE,

OUT OF WHOM, THROUGH WHOM, AND TO WHOM, ARE ALL THINGS;

WHO IS CALLED

GOD THE FATHER, SON,

AND

HOLY GHOST,

THIS SIMPLE WITNESS OF TRUTH, BORNE OF HIM

IS, IN FILIAL LOVE AND HUMILITY,

DEDICATED AND OFFERED.

(Most mercifully and powerfully to bless it for the End it is intended, and to defend it against the Devil and his whole host of evil Angels and Men, whose Interest it is that the Everlasting Love should not have the sole Dominion over the whole Creation, and come to be ALL IN ALL,)

By

PAUL SEIGVOLCK.

TO THE READER.

There have been many books published in our language upon the subject of the restitution of all fallen intelligences; some of them fraught with learning and criticism, as Dr. Burnet's piece on the state of the dead; the Chevalier Ramsay's philosophical principles of natural and revealed religion; and above all of this kind, the treatise of Mr. Stonehouse, late vicar of Islington: a work which is worthy of the notice of the learned world, and to which I do not know that there has ever been an answer attempted.

While the above gentlemen have written on this great subject for the learned, others have no less laudably employed their talents for the service of the bulk of mankind, by bearing their testimony to the universal and efficacious love of God to his rational creatures, in plain popular style: among whom we find Mr. Jeremiah White in the last century, and Mr. Winchester of late; the latter of whom has not only presented to the world, the evidence of the restoration of all things, in his dialogues, lectures on prophecy, and numerous other tracts; but has also favoured mankind with the first edition of Mr. *Seigwolck's* book, that has been printed in *Old* England.

Notwithstanding the opposition which some mistaken (but otherwise good) men have made to the universal doctrine, the first impression of this piece is sold off; so that a copy of it has been hardly to be procured for above twelve months past, though it was published only in 1792. A proof this, that mankind begin to have their eyes more opened, and their hearts more expanded, than formerly; and that, instead of the contracted sentiments which have long set Christians at bitter variance with each other, they now begin to think themselves the children of one common Father, whose mercy, whose *tender* mercy, is over all the works of his hands.—May this view of the IMMORTAL GOD, in Christ Jesus, increase, until discord and hatred are banished from the earth.

I have found this little book very useful to myself. I did not, like Mr. Winchester, receive my first conviction of the truth of the universal doctrine from it; but it was the mean of fully establishing my mind in it. I remember particularly, that the seventh chapter, which treats of the word *eternity*, and the different eternities, or ages, mentioned in the scriptures, was very satisfying to me; as was the eleventh chapter, which treats of this present world, the world to come, and the still, or silent eternity.

I know of no book that is more calculated to disseminate the universal doctrine among *good* men, than this; for every one who has *tasted* that *GOD is Love*, will here find something that meets and accords with the warm and holy benevolence of his soul; and to them I do most heartily recommend it; being fully assured, that however such may differ in other things, they all bear in their hearts *good will towards men*.

They will not, therefore, be offended at my subscribing myself,

A Friend to all Mankind,

William Vidler.

London, June 8th, 1795.

PREFACE.

The little work here presented to the readers of the "Library," is perhaps the most remarkable treatise contained in the whole volume. It was originally written in German, and was, I believe, first published in Peterson's "Mystery of the Restitution of all things," vol. I., which appeared in 1700. In this very valuable work, the Universalist Historical Society, possesses the original edition of Seigvolck's *Everlasting Gospel.* During the former part of the last century, it went through several editions. It was republished at Leipsic in 1705, and again in 1713. In 1730 a new edition appeared at Frankfort and Leipsic, and another in 1743, at Altona.

It first appeared in English at Germantown, near Philadelphia, in 1753. It was probably brought to this country by some of the German Baptists, who are known to have sympathised with its author in the faith of universal salvation. This edition was printed by Christopher Sower, and purports to have been "translated into English by John S——," probably a son or brother of the printer. There is every reason to suppose that it was thus introduced to the readers of English, through the influence of Dr. George de Benneville, who came to this country about 1740, and was at this time residing in the immediate neighbourhood of Germantown. His long-tried and active zeal in the cause of Universalism, renders it in the highest degree probable, that he was deeply concerned in this publication. His previous residence for several years in Germany had, it is likely, made him acquainted with this treatise there. Rev. Elhanan Winchester, who published an edition of Seigvolck's Everlasting Gospel in London, 1792, uses the following language in reference to its translation in America: "This little book, which I now send abroad in this country, was originally written in the German language in the beginning of the present century and printed in Pennsylvania in 1753. I am well acquainted with the good man at whose instance and expense it was translated and printed. He had lived to see the little spark rise into a flame, and the small seed into a large tree; and may he still live many years, until this glorious system, so grand, so worthy of God, shall have prevailed to bring all the different sects of Christians to be of the same spirit, mind and judgment." I know not to whom this allusion would so naturally apply, as to Dr. Benneville, for whom it is known Mr. Winchester entertained the highest respect and the warmest friendship. I can, therefore, indulge no doubts that the Everlasting Gospel was translated and first published at the instance and expense of that remarkable man.

The edition published in London, by Mr. Winchester, was exhausted in less than two years, as we learn from the preface of a second edition, published by Rev. Mr. Vidler, in 1795. He says, notwithstanding the opposition which some mistaken (but otherwise good) men have made to the universal doctrine, the first impression of this piece is sold off; so that a copy of it has been hardly to be procured for above twelve months past, though it was published only in 1792."

Of the author of this work, I regret that I have it in my power to say very little. Mr. Whittemore, in his Modern History of Universalism, p. 128, note, says, on the authority of a friend in Ohio, that "Seigvolck was born and educated in Harford-schles in Holland; and flourished in the time of William, Prince of Orange. He was not a regular clergyman, as appears from his own preface to his Universal Gospel, which was originally written in Low Dutch, and shortly after translated into the German language. He was contemporary with three others, who preached the same doctrine; Fisher, Shetz and Shepherd, as appears from letters of correspondence between them. Shetz was considered a more able advocate of the doctrine than Seigvolck. They preached much in the Low Countries, and made many proselytes among the Hollanders. They were greatly persecuted, till the Prince of Orange gave them toleration, and arrested the civil arm which was about to be raised against them." Of the truth of this account Mr. Whittemore expressed some doubts, which were certainly well founded.

In the first place, Seigvolck was not cotemporary with William, Prince of Orange, if William I. the younger, generally called the Prince of Orange, be meant; for he was assassinated in 1584, while Seigvolck could not have been born till nearly a century after this date. But not to dwell on this point, I nowhere find the slightest intimation, except in the quotation above, that Seigvolck was a *Hollander*, or that this work was written originally in Low Dutch. In the German I discover no traces of its being a translation, nor does Peterson drop a hint that it is so. Speaking of the delay in bringing out the first volume of his work, he says, "Still I see the providence of God in this,—as also in other things—that I have meanwhile received an excellent treatise on the subject, which is very precious and may properly be called a compendium of this whole work, and which I here communicate."

Nor do I find any thing in Seigvolck's "own

preface" or elsewhere to show that he was "not a regular clergyman." Nothing of this kind appears in his work, so far as I have observed. What is said of his correspondence with Fisher, Shetz, and Shepherd, may perhaps be true. There were such men at least in Germany about the time of Seigvolck, who maintained the doctrine of Universalism. There is in the Franklin Library, Philadelphia, a volume in German, entitled, "Golden Rose, or a Witness of the Truth, &c., by Christopher Schurtz," one of the individuals mentioned above. The preface to the first part was written at Umstadt, September, 1724; the preface of the second part is dated Offenbach on the Maine, October, 1730. Among other things, it contains a correspondence between Shurtz and Fischer, the latter of whom appears to have been a magistrate. They had a mutual friend in an individual by the name of David Schaeffer, (in English Shepherd.) Both Fischer and Schaeffer died before the publication of the volume referred to, which contains an elegy on Fischer, and alludes in a touching manner to the death of Schaeffer, which seems to have happened about six months earlier. These warm hearted friends must have died between 1727 and 1731, though the date is not to be made out accurately. The last letter I find from Fischer is dated May, 1727. Schaeffer wrote a work, entitled, *Everlasting Gospel*, which I have never seen, but which, in company with this of Seigvolck, and that of Schurtz above alluded to, was made the subject of undoubtedly the earliest printed attack on Universalism in America. I refer to Rev. R. Pomp's Examination of the Doctrine of the Everlasting Gospel, published in German at Philadelphia in 1774.

It is worthy of remark, that I observed in the "Golden Rose" no allusion to Seigvolck or his writings. In all the correspondence it contains, there is nothing that bears his name. I find letters signed by "P. P." "A. J." "J. D. S." "J. P. S." "H. V. S." but I know no reason why we should suppose any of them to have been written by our author. His name, as it appears in the German, is *George Paul Seigvolck*, though in the translation, the *George* is, I know not why, omitted.

While I have no hesitation, therefore, in regarding the account of our author, communicated to Mr. Whittemore, as in almost every particular incorrect, I am quite at a loss what to think of him. Of the period when he lived, and the language in which he wrote, we are, I presume, satisfactorily informed, but of the place of his residence, of his profession, and even of his *name* we are by no means certain. John Otto Thiess, in his valuable little treatise "On the Scriptures and Church Dogma of the Eternity of Hell Punishments," tells us that Seigvolck's real name was *George Kleinnicolai*. His words are, "George Kleinnicolai published, under the name *George Paul Seigvolck*, the Everlasting Gospel," &c. The accuracy and fidelity of Thiess are such as to satisfy me on almost every point, and perhaps should do so on this, but there are circumstances which render it almost incredible that he should be correct here. It would be singular indeed if Seigvolck had been *ashamed* of the great truth he advocated, or *afraid* of what men could do to him for maintaining it. There is nothing in the work before us, that could give the slightest countenance to such a suspicion, but, on the contrary, much to show that he was willing, if need be, both to suffer reproach and persecution for the sake of that blessed Gospel, in which he rejoiced. Then it is very strange that he should live and be engaged in controversy, as he was more or less, for near half a century, and yet, so far as appears from the writings of the day, not be suspected of passing under a fictitious name. Mosheim, the ecclesiastical historian, mentions him, in a letter found at the end of the second volume of his Sermons, and drops no hint that he was not the veritable person whose name he bore. The Everlasting Gospel was first published, as I have said, in the year 1700. In the second volume of Peterson's "Mystery of the Restitution of all Things," we find a laboured review of a treatise, entitled, "Plain Instruction," by J. Haenfler, preacher, in the fortress of Custrin, which Thiess ascribes to Seigvolck, or rather to Kleinnicolai. This piece is called "Fundamental Considerations upon Haenfler's Tract," &c. and was published in 1702. It fills more than ninety folio pages. In 1711, we find him in the field again, and in controversy with several writers, who had been called out by the publication of Peterson's volumes. This work he entitled, "Vain Strife against Truth and Innocence." Another work of his appeared in 1717, entitled, "Presentation of what *the restitution of all things*, Acts iii. 21, must mean." About 1728, J. Laurence Mosheim, the celebrated ecclesiastical historian, gave to the world his "Thoughts on the Doctrine of the end of Hell-punishments." To this Seigvolck replied in 1729, in a work entitled, "Modest and Fundamental Thoughts upon Mosheim's Thoughts," &c. It is of this work that Mosheim probably speaks in the letter above referred to. Though wishing to seem exceedingly cool and unaffected, it is apparent from the whole tone of the letter, that he was not a little stung by it. During the same year he also published "Decisions of some of the most Important Questions relating to the Kingdom of Christ." The controversy with Mosheim seems to have been continued, or revived again, some years after, for we have in 1746 another volume from Seigvolck, which relates to this subject, entitled, "Scriptural and Rational Consideration of the grounds both for and against the Absolutely Endless Misery of the Transgressors against God, and their final Restoration to Holiness and Happiness." A very active controversy was kept up for some years in which several individuals on both sides engaged.

Now it seems to me very strange that Seigvolck should have been thus, for almost fifty years, before the public as a controversialist, and yet have passed, this whole time, under a fictitious name, and so far as appears, without the slightest reason. But I shall leave the subject with the facts now stated, to

the judgment of the reader, confessing at the same time, that I am quite unable to decide the point. Thiess shows a great familiarity with the history of Universalism in Germany during the period in which Seigvolck lived and wrote, and his statements are certainly deserving of great confidence; at the same time I confess myself unable to account for the facts stated above, on the supposition that *George Paul Seigvolck* is only an assumed name. I had hoped to receive ere this, some works from Germany, which would probably have settled all doubts on the subject, but I have been disappointed.

I turn for a moment from the author to his work. It has without doubt some faults. The author's mind was too much inclined to the notion of a millenium then drawing nigh, and therefore to some fanciful views quite inconsistent with sound criticism, and the laws of interpretation. At the same time, this little volume contains a great amount of thought, and some of the clearest and most scriptural views of the divine character and government. You can hardly turn to a single page that does not embody some great and precious truth, and so fortified by apt quotations from the inspired word, that it must be difficult for any candid mind to read without being impressed by it. The work has, therefore, had no little influence in extending the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. Mr. Winchester says, "It was the first book that ever I saw, which treated upon the subject of the Universal Restoration, and it was by reading a little therein that I first began to turn my thoughts and attention to the system which I now hold. Indeed, the arguments pressed upon my mind in such a manner that I could not get rid of them; and though I strove long against them, yet they conquered me in about three years. I think it was in the year 1778 that I first saw this book, and the first piece I published upon the subject, was a sermon delivered April 22nd, 1781. * * I cannot help, therefore, having a great regard for this work, as it proved the first mean of my conviction, and at length brought me to embrace this most glorious and universal plan of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Mr. Vidler says, "I have found this little book very useful to myself. I did not, like Mr. Winchester, receive my first conviction of the truth of the universal doctrine from it; but it was the mean of fully establishing my mind in it. I remember particularly, that the seventh chapter, which treats of the word *eternity*, and the different eternities or ages, mentioned in the Scriptures, was very satisfying to me; as was the eleventh chapter, which treats of this present world, the world to come, and the still or silent eternity. I know of no book that is more calculated to disseminate the universal doctrine among good men than this; for every one who has tasted that *God is Love*, will here find something that meets and accords with the warm and holy benevolence of his soul; and to them do I most heartily recommend it; being fully assured, that however such may differ in other things, they all bear in their hearts *good will towards men*."

The copy here followed is that of the London edition. It differs somewhat in words and phrases, from that of Germantown, though it is the same translation. The translator was evidently a German, and some of his expressions, and even the structure of many of his sentences, are quite too literal to be English. Many of these blemishes Mr. Winchester has silently corrected, but apparently without any knowledge of the original. Hence it happens that it is not always quite true to the author's own expression, though preferable to the edition of 1753. Had I the leisure, I would revise it by a careful comparison of the translation with the original German, though it may be well doubted whether the improvement would pay for the trouble. Mr. Winchester also, for the most part, quoted entire the passages of Scripture which the author barely referred to, and moreover, added some proof texts which the author had omitted.

It might, perhaps, have been for the advantage of the general reader, had this little work been accompanied by a few notes more fully opening some things which are here left obscure, or correcting some errors which it undoubtedly contains. But want of time forbids my undertaking such a task at present, and the work is therefore commended as it is, to the candid and prayerful consideration of the reader.

T. J. Sawyer.

New York, Feb. 28, 1844.

MR. WINCHESTER'S PREFACE.

THE little book which I now send abroad in this country, was originally written in the German language in the beginning of the present century, and translated into English, and printed in Pennsylvania in the year 1753. I am well acquainted with the good man at whose instance and expense it was translated and printed. He has lived to see the little spark rise into a flame, and the small seed into a large tree, and he may still live many years, until this glorious system, so grand, so worthy of a God, shall have prevailed to bring all the different sects of Christians to be of the same spirit, mind, and judgment. Then shall the glorious prophecy of Isaiah be fulfilled, "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion." Chap. lii. 8. And also that part of our blessed Saviour's prayer, "That they all (who believe on me) may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me. St. John xvii. 21, 23.

The divisions and animosities among Christians are great hindrances to the conversion of the world to Christianity, and until unity of spirit and harmony of sentiment take place in a much greater degree than at present, we cannot expect the knowledge of the Lord to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. But that such a glorious event shall take place before the conflagration, is to me as plain as express prophecies can make it, and may the Lord hasten it in his time!

The system held out in the following pages appears to me the only one that in the least bids fair to unite the two great bodies of Christians, that have so long and so bitterly opposed each other, *viz.* those who assert that Christ died for all, and yet that there shall be but few, comparatively, that shall finally derive any saving benefit therefrom; and those who assert that all for whom the Saviour died shall indeed be saved, but that he died only for a few. For it seems highly improbable that either of these sects should ever so far change their ground, as to go over to the opinions of the other; since one party charges the tenets of the other with want of benevolence, and the other as successfully returns the charge by representing their antagonists as entertaining dishonourable thoughts of the wisdom and power of the Deity. Therefore if a reconciliation takes place between them, it must be on some middle ground where both may meet without giving up their favourite opinions; and this appears to me to be no other but the system of the Universal Restoration; and whenever it shall universally prevail, it will bring this most desirable event to pass.

This book I esteem as valuable on three accounts; First, it was written at a time when this system was but little known, having been in a great measure lost during the long night of popish darkness, which overspread the Christian world for so many ages. This little book was at first like a light shining in a dark place, but now the day is broke, and the light shines in a most glorious manner.

Secondly, The author throughout the whole writes like a sincere Christian, appears to have the most glorious ideas of God, of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the divine perfections of the Deity, and of the way of salvation; and he constantly appeals to the sacred Scriptures for the proof of what he writes. And he appears to me as one that had a very serious regard to truth, and to the general welfare of mankind; and while he holds forth the glorious system of the Restoration for the comfort of the fearful, he speaks in such a manner of the terrors of the Lord, and the punishments of the future state, as is sufficient to alarm the consciences of the careless and secure.

Thirdly, It was the first book that ever I saw which treated upon the subject of the Universal Restoration, and it was by reading a little therein, that I first began to turn my thoughts and attention to the system which I now hold forth. Indeed the argument pressed upon my mind in such a manner, that I could not get rid of them; and though I strove long against them, yet they conquered me in about three years. I think it was in the year 1778 that I first saw this book, and the first piece I published upon the subject was a sermon delivered April 22nd, 1781, to which I added a list of the passages of the Scripture which I judged to be most in favour of the Restoration, and answers to the principal objections most commonly brought against it.

I cannot help therefore having a great regard for this work, as it proved the first mean of my conviction, and at length brought me to embrace this most glorious and universal plan of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

As some of my friends in this country have read, and greatly admired this book, and others who have only seen a part of it quoted in my Lectures have expressed their wishes to have

he whole, I have in compliance with their arnest requests, undertaken to republish it, nd hope it may be blest to the comfort and alvation of many souls.

I have in some places corrected the lanuage a little, and have made a few small lterations, but in general have followed ny author exactly, as he never appears to me to vary from what I judge to be the truth of the gospel.

May the blessing of heaven attend this publication to all who read it, is the earnest desire of one who takes pleasure to subscribe himself a friend to the whole human race.

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

BELOVED READER:

GOD, who wills not that any one perish, ut that every one turn to repentance, always ised this method, that, before he visited the orld, or certain nations, with his judgments, e first poured out upon them all the riches f his long-suffering, love, goodness, and mery, in such a measure as is allotted to every ge; to try thereby, as it were, to his utmost, hether some might be persuaded to forsake heir sinful ways, and to be saved from the estruction otherwise waiting for them.

Thus he gave divers preachers of righteusness to the antediluvian world, and waitd full an hundred and twenty years for their epentance. Before God executed the judgnent of the Assyrian and Babylonian captiity upon his people of Israel, he did not only irst bestow upon them all manner of bodily ood, but also sent them many of his faithful ervants and prophets, who delivered unto hem many excellent prophecies concerning he *Restorer of all things*, the Lord Messiah. Yea, before he passed the next by far more readful judgment upon this nation, he first ent them even his only and most beloved Son, isclosing unto them by him most perfectly *is infinite love towards all his creatures;* which lso afterwards he did by his holy apostles.

Now, since verily the future great and errible day is nigh at hand, wherein the aner of the hitherto so patient LAMB is to be indled against the present anti-christian orld, Rev. vi. 16, 17, what wonder, then, that od, who willeth not the death of a sinner, is pening at this time all the treasures of his verlasting love towards all his creatures? Iis design in so doing is, with respect to the icked, to try his utmost, and to see whether y these means he may bring some of them to epentance, so that they may begin to love gain that God who with his eternal love and ercy so tenderly loves them, and thus escape e future terrible judgment, and be able to tand before the Son of man. But as to the ttle flock of his faithful, or the bride of Jeus, which is on her pilgrimage in the church ilitant here on earth, he is leading them now pon Mount Tabor, there to let them see their uture transfiguration, yea, the abyss of his perfect love, thereby powerfully to strengthen them against their approaching sufferings, because they will soon be led with their bridegroom, to Mount Golgotha, there to be crucified with him. For, verily, the perfect deliverance of the children of God will not come till they have been first put to the test in *Laodicea*, and the empire of darkness has exercised its most extreme fury on them.

Now, for the above-mentioned purpose it is, that this simple testimony of the *everlasting and endless love of GOD* towards all his creatures, is recorded in this present little book. If thou, *beloved reader*, makest proper use of it, (to the end whereof I wish thee the necessary light of the Holy Spirit) thou wilt reap abundance of benefit from it in time and eternity, and not know how to thank God, the infinite love, enough for it.

But if thou turnest into lasciviousness, that which is declared unto thee in order to bring thee to repentance and true amendment of life, and if thou dost pervert it to fortify thyself in thy carnal security; then will, O man, thy doom be just in the day of judgment, nay, even in this world, may thy outward state and condition here be whatsoever it will, emperor, king, prince, count, baron, gentleman, citizen or peasant, rich or poor, learned or unlearned. I and all the children of love, who by the enlivening knowledge of the everlasting love of God, which is represented unto thee in this treatise, quite plain, and without obscure enigmatical or proverbial sayings; we, I say, who are not made careless by such love of God, but daily more and more sanctified and mightily encouraged for our spiritual combat against the devil, world, sin, hell, and death, we will assist in condemning thee. Yea, this little book, which now is given thee as a mean of life, shall then become thy death, a worm which will gnaw thee day and night, an unextinguishable fire. The Lord preserve thee from it, if thou desirest to be preserved.

If any one should undertake rashly to contradict the eternal truth set forth in this treatise, or to write against it, he may do it at his peril; but then I would have him

to know, that the empty vapours of the glosses of his reason will never be able to obscure the bright sun-beams of so many clear testimonies of the holy Scripture, which treat of the everlasting love of God towards all his creatures; (especially as they are exhibited in the 12th chapter of this treatise) and that I count him too feeble and unable to thrust that God from his throne, who is everlasting love towards all his creatures, and to enthrone a strange God, who is to be worshipped as endless fury towards most of his creatures.

And if any body shall go so far as to calumniate this testimony of eternal truth, and to persecute my person, as much as lies in his power, he must know, that I will not be revenged on him in any other way, than by offering him up day and night to the endless and tender love of God, together with all the rest of corrupt creatures, being prisoners in the centre of wrath, to the end that they may every one of them, by Christ Jesus, the Son of eternal love, be brought back again into the centre of eternal love, from whence they are fallen, and thus enjoy for ever and ever, that God who is nothing else but love! Yea, Amen, so be it, Lord Jesus, thou eternal and universal Saviour, Amen!

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL.

CHAPTER I.

God, in his Word, describes himself as the everlasting, essential Love; and the result thereof.

None can better describe God, than God himself, or the Holy Spirit of God which testifies of him in the sacred Scriptures. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." St. John i. 18.

"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

The Holy Spirit describes God, or the Divine Being, thus, that he is *a spirit*. St. John iv. 24.

Light, without *darkness*, 1 John i. 5. "The Father of Lights, from whom every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh down, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James i. 17. *A consuming fire.* Heb. xii. 29; Deut. iv. 24.

But all descriptions of the Divine Being, that we find in the holy Scriptures, together with all that may be believed, thought, or uttered of God, centre in this one word, *Love*; which the Spirit of truth attests by St. John, saying, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is Love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John iv. 8–16.

If God is Love essentially, and so that God and Love is one and the same thing, it undeniably follows, that whatsoever God doth, (though in our eyes it should appear to be the most terrible affair) proceeds from Love, because God, who does it, is Love itself: as, on the contrary, whatsoever Satan doth, let it appear never so good and useful, proceeds from hatred against God and his creatures.

All works, that are not works of love, in their very principle, or spring from it as their centre, are not the works of God; because God, as the essential, everlasting, unchangeable love, can do no other but works of love. As the tree is, so are its fruits. St. Matt. vii. 16–18; xii. 33.

All creatures, considered in themselves, without their coherent corruption, are productions of the eternal love of God.

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." Rom. xi. 36. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created." Rev. iv. 11.

Therefore, since God cannot hate himself, he cannot hate his creatures, or that in them which his hands have made. "For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made; for never wouldst thou have made any thing if thou hadst hated it." Wis. xi. 20.

So that whatsoever God, who is Love, doth and purposeth with his creatures, as noble productions of his love, both in this and in the future ages, must proceed from love, and thus with respect to the creatures, all the purposes of God must have something good and salutary for their ultimate end. "For the Lord will not cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. iii. 31–33.

Now, as it is the love of God that made the creatures, that through Christ redeemeth them from sin and the curse, that sanctifieth and purgeth them from all disorder, that protects and preserves them, and bestows all manner of good upon them; even so it is the same love which punisheth the creatures when they are found in rebellion against their Maker, and do not continue in the order in which he first created them. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent." Rev. iii. 19. Hence all punishments wherewith God visits his creatures, as far as they come from him, and are considered according to their first principle, are works of divine love.

If all punishments determined by God for the creatures, be they never so dreadful, are (when considered according to their inmost centre and principle) works of divine love, it necessarily follows from hence, that even the most dreadful punishments which God, in the age or ages to come, will inflict on bad angels and men, as far as they proceed from him, are grounded on no other principle than that of love; since God, who condemneth and sentenceth the corrupt creatures to such punishments, is the essential, everlasting, and unchangeable love, and nothing else but pure love, and will remain such unto all endless eternities, and therefore, all, whatsoever comes from him, must proceed from love. If such punishments, on God's side, had any other ground but love, then would that God, who punisheth his creatures from such a ground, be no God; because the true and only God, besides whom none other is to be found, is nothing else but pure love, and who there-

fore can do nothing else but what springs from the centre of love, and returns into the same.

"Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God." Isa. xliv. 6. And this God, besides whom there is no other, is love. 1 John iv. 8, 16.

Hence it follows, without contradiction, that not one of those punishments which God has determined for the depraved creatures, can be intended for the never-ceasing, and endless perdition and torment of those intelligences that had their origin from the unchangeable love of God; but they must needs aim at, and be designed for, their final preservation, melioration, and restoration, let them last as long as they will: because the deepest ground of all punishments determined by God, for the creatures, so far as they are his doing, is his infinite and unchangeable love. And it is impossible that love should, without end, plague and torment that which it loves; but by all pains and torments, seeks, and can seek, nothing else but the amendment of its beloved object. For *love thinketh no evil;* 1 Cor. xiii. 5, much less does evil, or designs to do it.

CHAPTER II.

What the Wrath of God is, and his Justice in punishing.

As the whole Divine Being is pure love, so are likewise all the attributes of God; as for instance, his wisdom, omnipotence, holiness, mercy, truth, &c. at the bottom nothing else but love. If any thing could be said of God, which is not grounded upon love, or is contrary to it, God would have something in himself, which would make him to be no God, because the true and only God is entirely an ocean of love.

From hence may be easily conceived what God's wrath is, and his justice in punishing, of which the holy Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament, make mention so frequently: namely, such wrath and punishing justice of God, is, as all other divine attributes, nothing else but his essential love, which, as it shows itself *pure with the pure*, 2 Sam. xxii. 26, 27, that is, deals most kindly, lovingly, and bountifully with those creatures who stand in their right order, in true humility, and subjection to God: so with the *froward it will show itself froward*, or *unsavory*, Psalm xviii. 25, 26. That is, with the perverse, rebellious, and proud creatures, who do not stand in that true order wherein God would have them, but are disobedient, and will not be subject unto him; with such it will deal hardly, and as it were act perversely with them: "for God resisteth the proud," 1 Peter v. 5, and he will torment them by all manner of bodily and spiritual plagues, both in this, and the next age, until they shall be subdued, and shall acknowledge their offences, humbling themselves with their whole heart, before the righteous God, and in so doing shall be made partakers of the sweet effluence of his infinite and everlasting mercy and love.

So God is terrible, both in this and the other world, for this end only, that at the last he may be gracious and merciful to those to whom he has been terrible. In short, God, when he is angry, doth a *strange work*, both in this and the next age, to the end that afterwards he may do his *proper works*, which are those of love, grace and mercy.

"For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." Isa. lvii. 16.

"He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever." Psal. ciii. 9.

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Rom. xi. 32.

See also Deut. xxviii. from verse 15, to the end, compared with chap. xxx. 2–6, &c. compared with Lev. xxvi. ver. 14–45.

God always continues the same towards all his creatures, and his nature, which is love, is unchangeable, therefore all the anger of God, both in this world and that which is to come, hath only love for the foundation of its working; yea, it is in reality nothing else but his essential and ever abiding love, which must compel those creatures by terrible judgments to obey him, that will not be brought to it by fair and gentle means; nevertheless so, that the obedience to which they are brought in such a dreadful manner, doth not remain forced: which is to be concluded from this, that the whole creation shall at last praise God, see Rev. v. 13, compared with Psal. cl. 6. And the reason for it will indisputably be, because that all shall *taste and see that the Lord is good*, and that it is well with those that obey him. Psal. xxxiv. 8.

Hence it clearly appears, that it is impossible, that the wrath of God, and his justice in punishing, (since they have nothing else but the essential love of God, for their deepest principle,) should be designed for, and tend towards the endless perdition of those creatures that were produced from God's everlasting love, and which God, as such, can no more hate than he can hate himself; but that God in all these punishments, can have no other final view than the rooting out of sin, and the mending and restoration of the corrupt creatures.

And in such a sense it is that God is called in the holy Scriptures *a consuming fire*, not as if he intended entirely to consume his creatures, or to plague and torment them without end; but because he will consume the evil in and about his creatures, which by their wilful turning away from God, they have brought upon themselves, and mixed with their being, and which he will at last extirpate out of his whole creation, and every individual creature, and annihilate it: which certainly cannot be done without great pain to the corrupt creatures, whose whole will is so coherent with the evil. The whole creation "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Rom. viii. 21.

"Then shall be brought to pass the saying, that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, or hell, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin." 1 Cor. xv. 54–56. "Death the last enemy shall be destroyed." ver. 26.

"Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." St. John i. 29, where I would have you consider in the original, the force of the expression. *Sin of the world*, and the word *take* or *bear away*, which properly signifies, *to make that something which now exists, to be hereafter no more.* Such a Saviour and Redeemer we have in the person of Christ, *who will take away the sin of the world;* that is, he will by the power of his most precious blood, shed for the sins of the whole world, bring things at last to such a pass, that no sin at all, and consequently, not the least evil will be any more found in the world, or in the creatures of God, but be totally destroyed and swallowed up in victory, together with the wages of the first and second death, depending thereon.

CHAPTER III.

Every thing that God willeth, must absolutely be fulfilled at last; and what is to be concluded therefrom.

Every divine will, let it be *conditional* or *absolute*, is in great earnest, and of almighty power, and must therefore infallibly and actually be fulfilled at one time or another, be it never so long delayed.

"Whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, that did he in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas, and all deep places." Psal. cxxxv. 6.

"And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" Dan. iv. 35. He "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. i. 11.

Now since God in his word so earnestly declares, and hath confirmed the same by a most solemn oath, that he hath "no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, nor in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live:" Ezek. xviii. 23, 32; xxxiii. 11. That he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. iii. 9.

That he "will have all men to be saved, or restored, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4. That at last *he will make all things new*, nothing excepted. Rev. xxi. 5. It unavoidably follows, that his divine will must needs be finally accomplished in respect to all, and every one of his creatures, whose death and destruction he willeth not, whom he will have to be saved, and which he will make new. If it be not done in the present time, as indeed it is not but to the smallest number of the corrupt creatures, it must necessarily be done in the age to come, at least before that period when Christ, after all things shall be subdued to him, and subordinate under him, that is, restored to that true order, in which they were created by him in the beginning, shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, even the whole restored creation; to the end that the most Holy God, who cannot unite himself with any thing that is impure, may be *all in all*, and fill all with his glory. See 1 Cor. xv. 24–28. Col. 1. 16, compared with Gen. i. 31.

The holy Scripture declares that wicked men both can and do oppose and resist God; St. Matt. xxiii. 37., xxii. 3. St. John v. 40., Acts vii. 51. As also that no creature can resist the will of God; Rom. ix. 19., Dan. iv. 35. Though here seems an apparent contradiction, yet both these positions may well consist together; and here may be said, *Distinguish between the times, and the Scriptures will agree.*

The creatures may withstand the will of their Creator; but this is not to be understood in such a manner, as if there was an ability and power in them, whereby they might as it were, repel and conquer the power and might of God that works in and upon them, so that the same could never get its last end with such rebellious creatures. For it is only with God's permission, and as long as he thinks fit that the creature is suffered to withstand or resist God, for reasons best known to him, and to the end that the creatures, who will not voluntarily choose the salvation and well-being offered to them, may taste of the bitter fruits of their disobedience, and on themselves learn to know the difference between good and evil, which before they would not believe, when God in his word did set it before their eyes; which, through the wisdom and mercy of God, will at last have this good effect upon the malicious creatures, that they will, as conquered, give themselves up to their Creator, justify the punishment of their transgressions, and praise the most holy justice of God manifested therein, and consequently humble themselves before the Supreme Being, who is able to subdue all, however great, mighty, haughty or malicious they may be; and thus by the grace of God, which they will embrace anew after they have suffered their punishment, they shall be divested of all their obstinacy.

Of this only true and certain way for the restoration of all stubborn and rebellious creatures, God has showed us a very remarkable instance in Nebuchadnezzar, as a pattern of the rest of obdurate men and creatures. The confession of this haughty monarch, concerning the most High King of Heaven, after he had felt the weight of his punishing hand, will ever hold true. "He doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? All his works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Dan. iv. 35, 37.

It is therefore clear, that no creature can resist the Creator to all endless eternity, or as long as God is to remain God, but only to a certain period or age, be that short or long, 10, 100, 1000, 10,000, 20,000, 40,000 or more years, yet at last it must come to an end.

For if it was possible for the creatures to resist their Creator in such a manner as to repel and conquer his Almighty and Divine power, by the power of their iniquity, and consequently without God's permission and the withdrawing of his might, to withstand him, and to continue in obstinacy, bitterness, hatred and enmity against him, and what is more, to all endless eternity, and as long as God shall exist, (as has been commonly taught) it would indisputably follow, that the creature, and that which is evil, is as strong, or stronger than God, and that which is good; or that the will of God is not in earnest, when he with so many solemn expressions declares, that he heartily desires the salvation of all men; that he is not pleased with the destruction, death, and misery of his creatures; but rather earnestly requires, that they should repent and live; and that he will make all things new. But neither can be thought of God without the greatest blasphemy, as it would entirely overthrow the whole Divine Being, make God to be no God, but an impotent idol, or a hypocrite; and consequently quite open the way to all iniquity and atheistical mockery.

CHAPTER IV.

It is impossible that two contrary things should be both of endless duration.

It is as impossible that there should be two endless contrary things, as that there should be two real contrary Deities, a good God, and a bad one, or two sorts of contrary creatures, both of truly divine original, some being made good by God, and others bad.

For an absolute and merely infinite duration, which has neither beginning nor end, is, according to the confession of all divines, yea, of every reasonable man, a property peculiar to the uncreated Being only. But such an infinite duration, which although it has a beginning, yet shall have no end, can only be the property of those creatures that are of divine original. For as these, according to the language of Scripture, are of divine origin, and therefore are rooted in God, or in his almighty creating power, which has no beginning, they can also be everlasting, their existence or duration can also be without end in God. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being. For we are also his offspring." Acts xvii. 28.

But whatsoever has not its eternal root in God, or in his eternal creating power, but is sprung up in the creature in this world, by its voluntary turning away from God, and against his holy will, and consequently is an abomination and displeasure to the Most High, and is only suffered by him, such as sin, and the punishment depending thereon, these things cannot possibly be of an absolutely endless existence, and duration, or remain so long as God shall exist; but must of necessity cease at last, and be annihilated.

For as God is a Being to those creatures which he created good, and which exist through his will, whereby they may subsist and be preserved without end; so he is, on the contrary, to iniquity and sin, (which against his will is sprung up in and sticks to the creatures) a consuming fire, whereby all sin and perverseness in the creatures must be at last consumed, annihilated and separated from them in the highest degree, in order to restore them to their primitive purity; in the same manner as fire does not consume and destroy the gold, but only the dross and that which is impure.

Now all those who pretend that the degeneracy and sin found in fallen angels and men, together with the punishment following it, are of an absolutely endless existence, and will continue so long as God exists, make sin either a God, or a creature of divine original; but how much this resembles the heresy imputed to the Manichees, is left to their own judgment: or they deny that God is entirely a consuming fire to sin: because, according to their pretence, he either cannot or will not destroy it in most of the creatures; and consequently represent him either an impotent God, or one who takes delight in sin and the punishment of it. For what man will suffer that continually before his eyes which is loathsome, or an abomination to him, if he has it in his power to remove it? Since God, therefore, has so earnestly declared in his word, that all sin is an abomination unto him, and that he takes no pleasure in the punishment of it; yea, that his end, in sending his Son, is utterly to destroy sin and death, and essentially to restore an eternal righteousness to all mankind, who all both sinned and died in Adam; so that "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life." Rom. v. 18. It is evident, that all those who by their tenets maintain, that God will suffer sin and the punishment of death in and upon his creatures to all endless eternity, which by his almighty power he can destroy, and hath solemnly promised that he will destroy, make the most true and holy God a liar and a hypocrite, and contrary to his own plain words, accuse him of taking delight and pleasure in sin, and the punishment of death depending thereon.

CHAPTER V.

The diabolical nature, and that which makes fallen angels to be devils, must be well distinguished from their angelical nature in which they were created; and the result thereof.

Two things are to be considered in all fallen and corrupted creatures. First, that nature in which God created them in the beginning; and, secondly, the degeneracy and sin, which through the creature's own fault has intermixed with that nature.

For instance, the soul and body, with all their powers and faculties, viz. the faculty to understand, to will or desire, to love, to act,

o see, to hear, to smell, to feel, to taste, &c., nay be truly called the nature of man, in which God created him. But what is called in, vice and degeneracy, and which coheres, nd is intermixed with, the human nature, ince the fall, is this, that man's understand-ng is darkened; his will, desires, and affec-ions, are not fixed upon God and everlasting hings, but upon the creatures, and those hings, which are transitory and vain; and hat man, according to his perverse will and esires, and the blindness of his mind and nderstanding, does not apply the rest of the aculties of his soul, and his body with all its imbs, to that use which is agreeable to God, ut, on the contrary, to such things as dis-lease him. Sin, therefore, consists in nothing lse but disorder and abuse; and when a man s converted, and of a sinner is made a godly nd holy man, he goes over from the disorder nd abuse of his nature, to the true order and ight use of it. St. Paul thus expressed the ifference: "As ye have yielded your mem-ers servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, ven so now yield your members servants to ighteousness unto holiness." Rom. vi. 19. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of od, that ye present your bodies a living sac-ifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service." Chap. xii. 1.

Now, as sin, which cleaves to the depraved reatures, is the only thing which God hates, o it appears impossible for him to hate in self the being or nature of his creatures, let hem be never so corrupt; but as he loved them hen he created them, he will love them to ll endless eternity, because, as creatures, hey are the productions of his eternal, un-hangeable love. "For of him, and through im, and to him are all things." Rom. xi. 36. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, onour, and power: for thou hast created all hings, and for thy pleasure they are, and were reated." Rev. iv. 11. "For thou lovest all he things that are, and abhorrest nothing hich thou hast made: for never wouldst hou have made any thing if thou hadst hated ." Wisdom xi. 24.

Although creatures that are endued by God ith a free will, may spoil themselves through he abuse of that free will, yet no creature of self can annihilate that being or nature hich God gave it, or make something so uite different of it, that nothing of a creature f God shall remain. For as no creature can ive itself a being, so neither can it take away r annihilate its own being. And as it is nly the Omnipotence of God which is able to roduce conscious intelligent beings, so also othing less than the same almighty power is ble to take away the existence of those crea-ures which he hath made. As long, there-ore, as a creature remains a creature, so ong something remains in it which God truly oves, viz. that being which he gave it; sup-ose the same to be never so disordered and orrupt.

Now all this is to be well considered with epect to fallen angles: for then we shall be ble to discern the deepest ground for the mys-ery of their restoration, and consequently omprehed it the more easily.

I mean, we must learn well to distinguish between that angelical nature in which God created them, and the iniquity and sin, which, through their own fault, has intermixed with such nature, the source whereof is their per-verse self-will, that caused them to leave their centre and principle of humility (wherein alone a creature can be happy) and to with-draw themselves from their obedience and subjection to God, and to rely on themselves, willing to live independent of God, nay indeed, to be themselves God. For such an indepen-dence as admits of none superior, or where one needs not to be ruled by the will and com-mand of another, is, and always must be an essential property of the great God and Crea-tor of all things, and cannot by any means belong to a creature, nor can be ceded to it by God, who *will not give his glory to another.* Isai. xlii. 8; xlviii. 11.

Therefore the Scripture very emphatically says of the devil, that he *abode not in the truth.* St. John viii. 44. And that *the angels kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.* Jude 6.

Now this perverse self-will in the fallen angels, together with all the iniquity that is in it, and produced thereby, is the proper diabol-ical nature, or that which makes them devils and enemies of God; and this alone is the thing which is an abomination to him, and what he hates in them.

But that an angelical nature in itself, in which God first created the fallen angels, and to which the iniquity, degeneracy, and per-verseness so closely cleave, or rather have quite penetrated through, and intermixed with, that I say is no devil, but according to the confession of all reasonable men, a good crea-ture of God, a production of eternal love, which the Creator as truly loves, as he loves the being and nature of men, yea, as himself, and will love to all endless eternity; and conse-quently, by virtue of such his everlasting, un-changeable, and almighty love, will of neces-sity bring it once into the right order again. For, as by CHRIST he has *created all things that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, &c.* Col. i. 16. (to which likewise in-disputably belongs to all fallen angles) even so it has also been the good pleasure of God *to reconcile all those things* (which were crea-ted by Christ) *unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven;* ver. 20. that is, by the power of his blood, shed for the sins of all, to make them fit and capable of being restored from their disorder to their first right and true order, though every one in his own time, so that at last not only the wrath of God may be turned away from the crea-tures, but also the enmity of the creatures themselves, cease, and the sorrow which the good and holy creatures of God really feel for their fallen and corrupt fellow creatures, may be no more; but universal joy, and everlast-ing praises to God may be caused and raised in the whole creation. The words of God, that he *will make all things new,* Rev. xxi. 5. are true, whether men believe them or not: their unbelief will not make the promise void. For as every thing was very good when first created by God, for *God saw every thing that he*

had made, and behold it was very good, Gen. i. 31. So when he shall *make all things new*, there will be neither sin, death, nor hell, nor sorrow, crying, nor pain, throughout the whole creation, which shall then be wholly *delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. Rom. viii. 21.

All men who rashly dare exclude one of the fallen creatures, be it never so corrupt, from the endless mercy and all renewing love of God, are not yet grounded in that *love to enemies*, which is so highly recommended to us by the universal Saviour of the world, (see St. Matt. v. 44–48; St. Luke vi. 27–36;) which distinguishes true Christians from unbelievers, and is the surest sign of our being the children of God. They are not grounded in humility, because they have not that deep sense of their own misery and most abominable condition by nature, that they ought to have; and consequently cannot duly pity other corrupt creatures as they ought, considering them as God's creatures. They are respecters of persons, and so not altogether made partakers of the divine nature; since with God, who is everlasting love towards all his creatures, as such, no respect of persons finds place, Acts x. 34; Rom. ii. 11; Col. iii. 25. They do not yet know what that Scripture meaneth "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, *that he might have mercy upon all*; Rom. xi. 32. And indeed God's mercy is not only towards all men, but also according to the plain testimony of truth, *over all his works*, Psalm cxiv. 9; to which indisputably the fallen angels belong, who in the beginning were even some of the most glorious and chief works of God, the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures calling them principalities, powers, and rulers. Ephes. vi. 12.

Those men do not understand how necessary that knowledge is, which St. Paul wishes all believers to "be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;" (or as the original may signify, *to know that the love of Christ far surpasseth all knowledge*;" that they might be filled with all the fulness of God, in such a manner as to see that it extends over the whole creation, and every individual creature, Ephes. iii. 18, 19. From whence it follows, that those cannot be filled with all the fulness of God, who will not comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of God, and that it is broader, longer, deeper, and higher, than all sin which is to be found in the creatures, with the corruption depending thereon; yea, who will not know, that the love of Christ infinitely surpasseth all knowledge of men and angels, but dare presumptuously confine it within the narrow limits of their own knowledge, and tenets taught by corrupt human reason. In short, these men who murmur against the goodness of the heavenly Father of the family, and complain of his everlasting love and mercy, may find both their pictures drawn, and their lessons given them, in St. Matt. xx. 10–16, and St. Luke xv. 28–32.

Now if that man, who, regardless of all remonstrances, would audaciously exclude but one creature from the endless mercy of God, deserves such a censure, what shall we say of those, who with great assurance, dare exclude from it so many thousands of millions of creatures, that through the blood of Christ are all made fit for redemption and reconciliation? Ah! may these poor men be prevailed upon, by the wounds of Jesus Christ, the universal Saviour of the world, and by the everlasting mercy and love of God, which will most tenderly embrace them too, to pity, in this case, their own souls, and to consider what an abominable arrogance it is, to make the love of God, which has no limits, much less than the love of men, who are bound to love even their worst enemies, and to recompense all evil with nothing but good; and yet with all their love they are no more to be compared with God, and his love, and mercy, than the least worm that creeps on the ground, and is trodden under foot, is to be compared to the highest angel in heaven, or one single drop of water to the vast ocean. Let them consider, what a terrible sin and rashness it is, only to acknowledge Jesus Christ, the universal Saviour of the world, by whom all things in heaven and earth were created, and are to be reconciled, to be an actual Saviour and Redeemer of about the thousandth part of mankind, and consequently rob him of almost all his glory, by leaving him for his real property no more than that very small number or handful of elect or first-born men unto salvation, (St. Matt. xxii. 14: chap. vii. 14;) and by excluding all the rest of the unspeakable multitude of men and creatures, to all eternity, from any real participation of the tender mercy and love of God, and the redemption of his beloved Son, although it evidently appears from Scripture to be designed for all. For, although it is too true, that a great part of mankind, like Esau, will, through their own fault, be entirely deprived of, and lose the great prerogative of their birth-right, and so far be cast away; yet it is utterly false, that therefore they will be altogether excluded from all enjoyments of the tender mercies of God, and be doomed to endless torments, and never, never feel the virtue of Christ's atoning blood. Can this be the perfect, ancient, and eternal Gospel, which Christ has commanded to be preached to *every creature*, St. Mark xvi. 15; or to the whole creation? which his apostles preached *to every creature which is under heaven?* Col. i. 23. Yea, was it this which Christ himself preached to the spirits in the infernal prison, when he announced to them that the judgment passed upon them had been only intended for the destruction of the flesh, or that which was carnal, sinful, and diabolical in them, but that they should *live again according to God in the spirit?* 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20, compared with chap. iv. 6. I can never believe this partial gospel to be that which Christ commanded to be preached to every creature, let who may, can, and will; but I rather hold it, if not for a quite perverse and new, yet at least for a corrupt, mutilated, and wrongfully circumscribed gospel, contrived and introduced by depraved and self-wise human reason, in order to obscure and suppress the true gospel of our eternal Redeemer, which

alone has the power to make men godly and happy from the bottom of their hearts, when the other only serves to propagate bigotry, slavish fear, and hypocrisy. And I am apt to think, if even an angel from heaven was to preach the before-mentioned curtailed gospel to the zealous apostle Paul, who in his writings has left us the most excellent testimonies of the impartial and universal love of God, he would denounce an anathema against him. Gal i. 8,9. Therefore all such of every sect and religious party in Christendom, who will not suffer the true ancient gospel of Christ to be preached, which, according to our Saviour's plain words, is designed for *every creature*, but with all their might endeavour to suppress it, in order to establish the new invented, partial, and mutilated gospel, which hardly extends to a thousandth part of God's creatures; all such, I say, will have great reason to be afraid of the forementioned anathema of the apostle Paul.

Those men discover a terribly envious spirit, and an intolerably diabolical pride, by grudging most creatures the endless mercy of God, and endeavouring totally to deprive them of it; but let them take care that thereby they do not incur the danger of being themselves for a long period excluded from the real enjoyment of it. This is certain, that in so doing, they commit a sin which deserves such a punishment.

For in the same manner as they behave towards their fellow creatures, that are in the estimation of God as good as themselves, even so will God behave himself towards them; and with the same measure that they mete unto their brethren, it shall be measured unto them; yea, *good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall be given into their bosom*, (St. Luke vi. 38.) See also to this purpose St. Matt. xviii. 33, 35. Let them reflect upon the terrible and just threatning which God has annexed as a conclusion to the book wherein he so plainly declares, that *every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them*, shall praise and glorify God and the Lamb for ever and ever, Rev. v. 13; and that he will *make all things new*, chap. xxi. 5. He says, If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Chap. xxii. 19.

Oh, how eagerly will all those upon whom this terrible judgment lights, wish that it may be true, what has been testified unto them of the everlasting riches of God's love; and that on the other hand, all opposite dogmas which convert the everlasting love of God into endless fury and wrath, though propagated by themselves in this world, may be false! but for their just punishment, they will have no full assurance, and consequently no comfort of it in their hearts, during all that terrible long period wherein God will entirely hide his face from them. See Prov. i. 24–32.

If we ponder well our own natural wretchedness, and the condition we are in under the fall, it should, methinks, bring pretty low; nay, utterly destroy that pride and envy of ours, which causeth us to endeavour rashly to exclude from the everlasting mercy of God, so many millions of angelical and human creatures. For without the mercy of God, we are not only as bad as the most wicked wretch on earth, but we are also nothing better than the devil and his angels. Nay, one may in truth say, that man, in some measure, has discovered greater wickedness against God's most holy majesty than the devils themselves. For the evil spirits have never yet opposed God in endeavouring to work out their own salvation, because the economy and proper periods for it are not yet come, and consequently they have had no opportunity of committing this most heinous of all sins; though they have opposed God, and still continue to oppose him, in his endeavours to deliver mankind from their power, and to translate them into the kingdom of his beloved Son; but this is hardly to be wondered at, considering the most depraved state they are in. But men, on the contrary, most vehemently resist the Holy Ghost in the work of their own salvation, from their youth, not only in ignorance, but too often knowingly and wilfully. Not to mention, that things cannot go worse among the devils, in their dark infernal regions, than they go among men of this wicked world. Ah, what discord is there among them! How do they plague and torment one another! What contentions, quarrels, seditions, vexation and oppression of the poor and needy! What wars and bloodshed do we not continually hear of! But that this is not the case with the devils (of which men ought to be ashamed) and that they do not fall out among themselves our Saviour himself declares, St. Matt. xii. 26, alleging at the same time the reason for it, because then their kingdom would not stand. There is another thing wherein men are frequently far more criminal than devils, and that is, in profane language, cursing, swearing, blaspheming, and execrating themselves: when an evil spirit spake to Jesus, with how much reverence he addressed him, "I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God!" St. Mark i. 24. And far from execrating themselves, or wishing damnation to come upon them, as wicked men frequently do, they earnestly besought our Lord that he would not torment them nor send them into the abyss. Chap. v. 7. St. Luke viii. 28, 31.

So it clearly appears, that in many cases the iniquity of men surpasses that of the devils themselves. A truly penitent, afflicted and contrite heart would infallibly despair at this terrible sight of human wickedness, when it comes to have a full view thereof as well in itself as in others, if the universal and most impartial mercy of God in Jesus Christ our eternal Redeemer, and through his all-sufficient merits, was not its comfort. In such a state men learn to set the true value upon the precious pearl of this evangelical truth, and begin to conceive that the origin of all railing against, and contradicting this blessed doctrine, is either that gross, or subtle pharisaical spirit in mankind, that cannot so easily be rooted out, even in the disciples of Christ; and this spirit prevents men from knowing, feeling, and acknowledging that more than

diabolical wickedness which lies in our corrupt nature, and consequently while under the government of such a temper, they can neither understand nor duly esteem that adequate and grand remedy designed by God for the curing and taking away of this great evil. So far indeed I allow a preference to fallen men before the apostate angels; that God offers his mercy first to men, since his justice requires that the *deceived* should be restored before the *deceivers*; but the ground for this preference does not lie in ourselves, but in the endless mercy and most holy justice of God. For in our depraved and corrupt estate, we need not imagine ourselves to be one whit better than the fallen angels, or to deserve the least preference before them.

That which makes them devils, and an abomination in God's eyes, namely, their *perverse self-will*, which will not bow under God, but would be entirely independent, not subject to the divine law; that same *perverse self-will*, is the thing in us which renders us as abominable in the sight of God as the fallen angels themselves. This perverse self-will is the true *devil* in all fallen sinful creatures, this is that which constitutes angels, devils, who otherwise would be good creatures of God. Hence it is that such men as follow their perverse self-will, (which may insinuate itself into the most sacred things) and suffer it to reign in themselves, and to prevail over them, are called in Scripture by the same names which are given to evil angels. They are for instance called *adversaries*, or *Satans*, which means the same, St. Matt. xvi. 23; 1 Tim. v. 14. Yea, *diaboli*, that is devils, or *calumniators*, &c., St. John vi. 70; 1 Tim. iii. 6, 7. Therefore all fallen men as far as they are under the dominion of sin, or their perverse self-will, are nothing else but *diaboli incarnati*, or *incarnate devils*. Whosoever will not know this, nor own himself to be according to the fallen nature as bad as the devil himself, such an one does not know as yet his sinful state as he ought to do; he is far from being rightly grounded in true humility, and there is as yet a great deal of the abominable seed of spiritual pride in his heart, let him think never so much of his holiness and humility. He has never yet begun truly and in reality to practise the earnest command of his Saviour, to *hate himself* or *his own life*, St. Luke xiv. 26, (to wit, in his own corrupt nature, which deserves as much to be hated as the devil himself) and therefore does not know how to esteem sufficiently the everlasting mercy of God, and the precious blood of our universal Redeemer. For if he but knew the horrible wickedness of his own evil nature, and had come duly to esteem the endless mercies of God and all-sufficient merits of Christ, he really would not grudge one of the fallen creatures a part in the boundless love of God, and that grace of Jesus Christ which is able to deliver souls from hell, but would wish them all to partake of it as freely as he himself attained it, even if there was not one word of it mentioned in the Bible; whereas the Scripture abundantly testifies of this boundless, infinite, everlasting love, and the whole creation declares it to us as it were with living voices, if we would but hear it.

Now our ever-loving God, who has begun to have mercy on fallen men, who, in their sinful nature, are *incarnate devils*, and has already made great numbers of them holy children of God, resembling the angels in heaven, and will continue so to do; the same ever-loving God, I say, will in his own time have pity also upon the rest of mankind, who in this life have forfeited their spiritual birthright; and not upon them only, but even on the fallen angels themselves, when they will begin to humble themselves truly before God. And then it will be as easy for him to make them holy angels again, as it was to make angel-like men and children of God of so many thousands of fallen men or incarnate devils. And that this will certainly come to pass in the fulness of the ages or periods appointed for it, will admit of no doubt, if we consider the promise of God, that he will *make all things new*. Rev. xxi. 5. And that he hath prepared *all things that are in heaven, and on the earth* for this renovation or actual reconciliation, by *reconciling them to himself by the death of his Son, who hath made peace by the blood of his cross*. See Rom. v. 10; Col. i. 20.

To conclude, let us further consider, that it will be as easy a matter for the everlasting mercy of God to forgive the fallen angels their sins, whenever they will begin to humble themselves before him, as it is for him to forgive us ours. For let their sins be ever so great, ever so many, or ever so grievous, yet both have but one source, that is, as above said, *self-will* and *pride*. And as the nature of things does not admit of any other source of evil, so there is no other God, but he who himself is mercy and love.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the everlasting Validity and Efficacy of the Merits of Christ, and the Eternal Redemption found out by him; and that the same is infinitely more powerful than all Sin, and Corruption springing therefrom.

None, it is to be hoped, who claims the name of a *Christian* among all religious parties of Christendom, let them otherwise be never so much divided, will deny Christ, our Redeemer to be stronger and far more powerful than the devil, and the grace of redemption and salvation procured by him through his merits and sufferings to be infinitely more efficacious than all sin, together with the corruption and misery springing therefrom. For whosoever would deny this, would not only declare himself an infidel, but even a blasphemer against Christ. Besides, the nature of the thing requires it, that a saviour or deliverer be stronger than the enemy whose prisoners he is to take away by force; and the plain word of God declares Jesus Christ to be such a Saviour and Deliverer. See Isai. xlix. 25, 26; Hosea xiii. 14; St. Luke xi. 21, 22; 1 John iv. 4; Rom. v. 20.

But there is a doctrine propagated and believed by many, which is quite inconsistent with what is advanced above; namely, "That although Christ has redeemed all men, or through his blood bought and reconciled them unto God, yet none really partake of his redemption but those who in this life believe in him, and by faith endure to the end; and that all the rest of mankind, who do not come to believe in Christ in this life, but continue in unbelief to the end of their days, will not only be terribly punished in the age to come," which is true, "but that they will, moreover, with all evil angels, be separated from God to all endless eternity, even so long as God shall exist, and shall suffer endless torments, and never share in the redemption of Christ."

How is it possible now, I pray, according to this doctrine, that Christ should be stronger than the devil? How can the grace procured and purchased by his merits, sufferings and death, be more efficacious than sin and all corruption and misery springing from it? For our Saviour declares in plain terms, and daily experience confirms it, that by far the smallest number of men find in their life time the narrow way of repentance and faith, and through the straight gate go into eternal life; but that, on the contrary, most of them go the broad way of perdition, and become a prey to the jaws of hell. See St. Matt. vii. 13, 14; St. Luke xiii. 23, 24; St. Matt. xxii. 14. Ah! if no more men are really partakers of the redemption of Christ, than those, who in this life come to be united to him, he will hardly be a Saviour to the millionth part of mankind; and Satan will, according to his wish and pleasure, keep the greatest number captives in his empire to all endless eternity. And according to this scheme, how can CHRIST be said to be stronger than his enemy the devil? But you will perhaps reply, that the strength of Christ manifests itself, and may be known by his really delivering and snatching out of the jaws of Satan the few elect. But pray, is Christ to be only a Saviour of the elect? Is he not also a propitiation *for the sins of the whole world?* 1 John ii. 2. And has he not bought with his blood those who *bring upon themselves swift destruction?* 2 Pet. ii. 1.

If a man was to give out of himself against his enemy, who had led a million of his people captive, that he was stronger than such an enemy, and that he would beat and spoil him of all his prisoners, because he heartily pitied the poor souls; and coming thereupon to the battle, was to deliver, of a million of prisoners, about three, or at the most ten, leaving all the rest in slavery, because the enemy had too well secured them; pray, would you believe such a man to be much stronger than his enemy, since of a million of prisoners, he had actually delivered about three or ten? Would you not be apt to say, that he had boasted much more of himself than he was able to perform, and justly conclude, that he must want either strength or power to overcome the enemy, or mercy and compassion towards the poor captives? Now, such a bragging, yea, unmerciful, or infirm man do we generally make of Christ, by teaching and acknowledging on the one hand, that he is an universal Redeemer, but on the other hand, perversely pretend, that but the smallest number of men, viz. the few elect (who, compared to the rest of mankind, are hardly as ten to a million) in reality partake of his redemption, and that all the residue of fallen men and other creatures are to be wholly excluded therefrom to all endless eternity. Certainly if Christ is no other than such a Saviour to us, I say again, the devil, who according to the common opinion, will for ever, world without end, and as long as Christ is to be Christ, keep in his power and under his dominion by far the greatest part of men, of whom we at the same time own that Christ has an earnest desire to redeem them, must be many thousand times mightier than he. Verily if this was the case with our Redeemer, he must either fall short of power to conquer the devil, or want pity and compassion towards those poor souls that are kept prisoners by the devil.

It may be you will make me another objection, and say, that Christ neither wants for force to conquer his enemy, nor mercy towards the captives; but that the reason why so few men are really delivered by him, is, because they resist his grace, and spontaneously desire to remain the infernal tyrant's slaves. To this I answer, But what is then such resistance and obstinacy in most men against the grace of Jesus Christ offered them? What is the blindness and hardness of their hearts, according to which they themselves choose to continue in the service of the devil? Are they not altogether the workings of Satan? Are they not all chains and snares wherewith he has bound and entangled poor men? Now if Christ, who is to be an universal Saviour of mankind, will in most men never, to all endless eternity, and as long as God is to remain God, destroy such works of the devil; if he will never break and untie the chains and fetters wherewith Satan hath bound the greatest part of mankind; it will still follow, that Christ must be either unmerciful, and not willing to do it, or that he is not able to perform what he would desire. But how absurd, nay, how great a blasphemy is it to make the devil, and that which is evil, stronger than Christ, and that which is good, and sin more powerful than the grace of God?

Thanks be to God, that in Christ we have such a Redeemer, who, although he is a *special Saviour of those that believe*, 1 Tim. iv. 10, because he will grant them to sit with him upon his throne, Rev. iii. 21, and make them partakers of all his glories, to which dignity and high degree of salvation, none of those will ever attain who must be humbled and brought to Christ by the judgment of the next age; yet he is nevertheless not a mere titular, but a real *Saviour of all* the rest of men: who *also by the blood of his covenant* sendeth forth his prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water, Zech. ix. 11, that is out of the state of the damned, where not one drop of comfort is to be found. He has *the keys of hell, and of death*, Rev. i. 18, and consequently is able to cast into, and discharge therefrom whomsoever he pleases; and he will actually *ransom them from* the power of *the grave* (or hell)

and will redeem them from death, in such a manner, as to be a plague to death, and total destruction to the grave (or hell.) Hosea xiii. 14. That is, he will continue so long to redeem from hell, till not one prisoner more shall be left in its jaws and in the power of the devil, and death, and all the power of Satan shall be destroyed and wholly annihilated. Then shall be completely fulfilled what is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh, death where is thy sting! Oh, grave (or hell) where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 54–57.

If but one soul was to remain in the power of the devil, death, or hell, to all endless eternity, as long as God shall exist, then the devil, death, and hell, would for ever have something to boast of against God, and to upbraid him with not being able really to spoil them of all their prisoners, to the very last, but that he was obliged to leave them something, and consequently give up the conquest to them. And thus *death* would not be entirely swallowed up in victory to all endless eternity, but would always keep something of his sting; and hell would not quite lose the field of battle, but would be for evermore able to make a scorn of those who should say, *hell, where is thy victory?* For it might at least boast of one soul of which Christ could not deprive it, though he had shed his blood for it. With how much more right now could the devil, death and hell, mock Christ and his believers, if they were to ask them, "O death, where is thy sting? O hell, where is thy victory?" in case these enemies could (according to the common pretence, whereof the Scripture knows nothing) keep at pleasure the greatest part of mankind for their prisoners as long as God shall exist!

It is plain that by Christ, the universal Saviour, all captivated men are to be actually snatched out of the power of the devil and his angels; and this, when it is fully accomplished, will be an occasion to oblige *Lucifer* and his angels also to humble themselves entirely before Christ Jesus, which, (except the incarnation of our Saviour, and what he did and suffered on earth to work out the salvation of his creatures) will be the greatest wonder that ever was wrought in the creation. And this the holy Scripture clearly foretels, when it says, that *all things under the earth*, that is, not only damned men, but even the fallen spirits, shall at last *bow the knee in the name of Jesus*, and *confess* with their inmost *heart* as well as *tongue*, that *He*, and not Satan, *is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Phil. ii. 10, 11.

Then they, together with all the rest of creatures, shall praise God with loud hallelujahs and inexpressible joy. See Rev. v. 13, compared with Psalm cxlv. 9–11; cl. 6.

For, when now the whole armour of this strong man shall be taken from him, and all his spoils divided, that is, all men who were made a prey of by him, restored to God, and brought again to the company of his saints, and Satan be thus entirely conquered by Christ, and reduced to the condition of a king without subjects or dominions, what then will he do else, but after the manner of an utterly routed enemy, be obliged to prostrate himself before his conquerer, and pray for mercy!

And this total subduing will make way for the restoration of Lucifer and his angels.

For, as the most high God could not have mercy upon them, nor could deliver them out of their most wretched condition, as long as through pride they wanted to be like him, or even above him; so may they be helped when all the stays of their pride are consumed, and reduced to ashes in the lake of fire and brimstone, and of proud and haughty devils they are become humbled spirits, that bow down in the dust before God and Christ, praying for mercy: for God resisteth only the proud, and without the least respect of person, giveth grace to all humble creatures. 1 Pet. v. 5; Isa. lvii. 15.

Although the offer of God's grace in the said manner will be very acceptable news to Lucifer and his angels, at the time of their deepest abasement and humiliation by Christ; (which doubtless will yet require many thousand years) nevertheless the doctrine of his restoration, and the means for it, are, in his present situation, not at all agreeable to him; but the distant prophecies of his subjection are to him most dreadful tidings. For as he is a proud and haughty spirit to the highest degree, who is by no means willing to be subject to God, but would fain be his equal, or rather above him, who with all his might opposes, and if possible, would dethrone the Most High; therefore it is intolerable for him to be foretold, according to divine truth, that by Christ all his power, his whole empire, and all his subjects, not one excepted, shall be taken from him, and he himself brought down so low as to lie in the dust like a vile worm before Christ, and to worship him; which at present he would reckon his greatest shame, and would much rather that Christ and his followers, together with the rest of mankind, should worship him, or take his will for their law. Therefore is this gospel a most frightful lecture to him, to hear that once he shall be entirely thrown down from his high places, and brought again into the right order of God's creatures, which is humility and subjection under God and Christ. Eph. i. 10.

That the doctrine that Christ will entirely vanquish the devil, is intolerable to him, the following parable may serve to illustrate.

Suppose a poor, miserable, naked beggar man, was to be presented to a grand, proud, and tyrannical monarch in the world, who was in possession of a vast empire, having many millions of subjects; and it should be foretold him by divine authority, that this man, so worthless and contemptible in his eyes, should one day or another, conquer his whole empire, and strip him of all his subjects, so that at last he would be obliged to fall down naked at his feet, to acknowledge him his lord, and depend on his mercy: can any one imagine this would be an agreeable prophecy to the said grand, proud and tyrannical monarch?

Would he not rather fret and fume, and treat them in the most barbarous manner, as mutineers and rebels, who should foretel such a revolution!

An instance of this we see in Herod, he only supposing in a foolish manner, that Jesus the new-born King of the Jews, might be a rival to him and his sons, what cruel means he made use of to prevent the imaginary mischief! See St. Matt. ii. Now the doctrine of the restoration of all creatures, is a thousand times more terrible news to the devil; by which it is foretold, that Jesus, *that most despised and rejected one*, see Isaiah iiii. 3, who when he dwelt on earth was despised and abhorred, whom Satan, through his instruments, did in the most terrible manner revile, mock, spit upon, persecute and torment; and who is still abused in his name, character, and followers, by the children of the devil: that he, I say, shall at last conquer the whole empire of Satan, spoil him of all his subjects and dominions, and oblige him to fall at his feet, who once *was numbered with the transgressors*, Isa. liii. 12, and worship him in the humblest manner.

In short, this doctrine tends utterly to destroy the kingdom of the devil, and all that is diabolical, such as pride, envy, and fury; and therefore the hearing of it, must be the greatest mortification to Satan imaginable.

From what has been said, it may easily be concluded, that it is no wonder if Satan is enraged against this holy gospel, and endeavours with all his power to suppress it, using especially for his instruments the hypocritical *Pharisees* of this age, false theologers, and the naturally and legally pious people, and such as are but half converted, whose minds are not yet free from wrath, and who look upon God as an endless furious being towards all his creatures, because their souls had never yet a due sense of his infinite love and mercy towards all his works. Nay, I am afraid that even many, otherwise well-meaning souls, will be stirred up to fight against this holy doctrine, particularly those who hold the traditions of their fathers for indisputably divine truths, which they have been obliged to swear to, and call them *the hedge about the Lord's vineyard*: for finding some of them diametrically opposite to this blessed gospel of the universal and impartial love of God, they will perhaps be enticed to declare it to be fanaticism, and a long condemned heresy, which they think themselves obliged to guard against. But if the whole world, and all those that are reckoned the wisest and most pious, were to rise up against it, this holy truth will, nevertheless, make its way through all opposition, and be applauded by the children of truth.

Ye that stigmatize the propagators of this doctrine in the world, do but consider what is represented thereby! It is the most *tender* and at the same time most just *mercy of our God, whereby the day spring from on high hath visited us*; in order *to give* also at last light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace! St. Luke i. 78, 79. Pray what harm can this do? you may protest against it as much as you please, the words of Solomon's song on our side, describing the majesty of the love of God, will nevertheless be found true, viz. "Love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel (or hard) as the grave, (or hell, to give it battle, and carry the day) the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." Sol. Song, viii. 6, 7.

Now, as the representation of God's universal and everlasting love must needs, for the above-mentioned reasons, be hateful to the malevolent devil; so on the contrary, that doctrine cannot but very much please him, which teaches that he will to all eternity, or while God exists, keep, as his subjects and slaves, the far greater part of mankind, though purchased by the blood of Jesus our Saviour; which consequently, according to his wish and pleasure, in general, and very near entirely sets at nought the intent of Christ's redemption, and the divine love and mercy manifested thereby. And which teaches that the greatest part of mankind, and all the fallen angels, shall always continue rebels in heart against God, without ever being brought down in true humility to worship God and Christ *in spirit and in truth*; for the *Father seeketh such to worship him*, and will have no other subjects and worshippers than such as those. St. John iv. 23, 24

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Word Eternity, and the different Eternities, or Ages, mentioned in the Scriptures.

The words *for ever, for ever and ever, everlasting, eternal*, expressed in the Hebrew language by *ad, olam, olamim*; and in the Greek language by *aion, aionios, aionion, eis, tous aionas ton aionon*, &c. have not always the same, but different significations in the Holy Scriptures, as is well known to the learned.

We may say, that in general, these words are used for every long and hidden duration or continuance of things, whether this duration be final and endless; or of such a nature, that, as it is not without beginning, rooted in the everlasting and incorruptible being of God, and his creating power, but has had its beginning from the creature, and so must of necessity cease at last, and have an end; or infinite, that is of such a nature that, as it had no beginning, either in respect to the real existence or being of the thing itself, or in regard to its root and origin, so necessarily has no end, or may at least be without end or any cessation.

Therefore, whenever we find the word *eternal*, or *everlasting*, in the holy Scriptures, we are not immediately to conclude that an absolutely endless duration must be intended; but we ought first of all to look upon the nature and property of the things that are said to be *eternal* or *everlasting*, and consider whe-

ther their nature will admit of an *endless*, or only of a *limited* duration, and explain the word *everlasting* accordingly.

That this is a true and irrefutable rule to be observed, in all explanations and expositions, we are taught, as school-boys, by the canon of logic; saying, *prædicata, intelligenda sunt secundum substratam materiam:* Or, *Talia sunt prædicata, qualia permittuntur esse a suis subjectis;* that is, "that what is said of a thing must be understood in such a manner as the nature of the thing will allow of." Such, for instance, is the term *power*, which is lodged in one person to command, or rule others. For this power is not the same in all persons that have any command or government; it being of one kind in an absolute emperor, monarch or king, and of another in a prince, and it is still different in an earl, count, baron, or gentleman. Nay, power may be different in a mayor or magistrate of a city, from that in a justice of the peace in the country; and yet there is some kind of power in all these. So it is with respect to the word *for ever*, or *everlasting;* all things which the Holy Spirit, in the sacred Scriptures, call *everlasting*, are, in a sense, really so, that is, they have such an existence and duration as is grounded on their nature, and especially on the will of God. For this the word *everlasting* really signifies, and nothing else, as I shall endeavour to show incontestibly before I have done. For the word *everlasting* is of a quite different extent when it is used to express the duration of the being of God, than when it is attributed to those creatures that have their being from God, and to the good which is derived from him; and again, it is still different when it is applied to sin, and the evil of punishment depending thereon, as coming from the creature alone without God. Now, if I say that the word *eternal*, when applied to God in the Scriptures, signifies an absolutely endless duration, because, God having no beginning, can have no end: and that when it is used of the creatures that have their being from God, as also of their good and blessed condition which they derive from him, it then signifies such an eternal duration, which, as to the real existence or being of things, has had its beginning, but is, or may be, without end; because God, in whose incorruptible, creating power, such things are rooted, has neither beginning nor end. If any should infer from hence, that the word *eternal*, or *everlasting*, must also signify an absolutely endless duration, when it is used to express the continuance of sin and the evil of punishment depending thereon, in this and the next state; such a conception would be more absurb than it would be to imagine the power of a country justice of the peace to be the same with that of an absolute monarch or king.

Therefore to form a true and distinct idea of the words *for ever, for ever and ever, everlasting*, and *eternal*, wherever they occur in Scripture, we have to observe, that all the *eternities* or *ages* mentioned therein, are chiefly divided into three sorts, and may be distinguished accordingly; as in some measure appears from the preceding paragraph, and is well known to people of understanding.

The last sort of eternities mentioned in Scripture, may be called *Æternitas absolute infinita a parte ante et post*, that is, an absolutely endless eternity; or, such a duration as has neither beginning nor end. This is always the meaning of the word *eternal* or *everlasting*, when it is applied to the Divine Being and his attributes; since God is JEHOVAH, or that supreme self-existent Being, which, as he never had a beginning, but has been in and of himself from *everlasting*, giving all other things their existence, so neither can he ever have an end."

Gen. xxi. 33, "And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of JEHOVAH, the *everlasting* God."

Exodus xv. 18. "JEHOVAH shall reign *for ever and ever*."

Psalm xc. 2. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world; even from *everlasting* to *everlasting* thou art God."

Psalm xciii. 2. "Thy throne is established of old; thou art from *everlasting*."

Jer. x. 10. "But JEHOVAH is the true God; he is the living God, and an *everlasting* King."

Rev. iv. 9, 10. "And when those living animals give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth *for ever and ever*, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth *for ever and ever*," &c.

The second sort of ages or eternities that the holy Scriptures speak of, we may call *Æternitas infinita a parte post;* that is, such an endless eternity or duration, which, although it has a beginning, yet will never have an end. This is intended by the word *everlasting*, when it is applied to the existence of those rational creatures which God hath made, and to the good which comes from God. Such is, for instance, the beatitude and glory of believers in the world to come. For, although the good that is to be found in the creatures, together with their existence, as distinct beings, has not always been, but has had a beginning, nevertheless it has absolutely an eternal root in God, in his almighty and incorruptible creating power, which is as ancient as God himself, because it is the same with God; and therefore his creatures, which, according to his wisdom, by his power, and for his pleasure, he hath created, may, and doubtless shall be preserved in existence to all ages, or while God exists, and their final state of happiness shall be of the same duration.

Isaiah xlv. 17. "Israel shall be saved in JEHOVAH with an *everlasting* salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded *world without end*."

Dan. xii. 3. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars *for ever and ever*."

St. John iii. 15, 16. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have *eternal* life. For God so loved the world, that

he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have *everlasting* life."

Ver. 36. "He that believeth on the Son hath *everlasting life*."

Chap. iv. 14. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into *everlasting* life."

Chap. v. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath *everlasting* life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life."

Chap. vi. 27. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto *everlasting life*."

Ver. 40. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have *everlasting* life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

Ver. 47. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath *everlasting* life."

Ver. 54. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath *eternal* life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Ver. 68. "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of *eternal* life."

Chap. x. 28. "And I give unto them *eternal* life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

Chap. xii. 25. "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life *eternal*."

Ver. 50. "And I know that his (the Father's) commandment is life *everlasting*."

Chap. xvii. 2. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh that he should give *eternal* life to as many as thou hast given him."

Ver. 3. "And this is life *eternal*, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

All these passages, and many more that might be brought, intend the second kind of eternities or ages: viz. those that have a beginning, but shall never have an end.

The third sort of eternities mentioned in the holy Scriptures, may be called *Æternitas periodica;* that is, such an age or duration of things which is limited within a certain period of time, longer or shorter, that has its certain beginning and end; since the things to which such an *aion*, or *for ever*, are ascribed are not to last to an endless duration. In this sense the words *for ever*, *everlasting*, &c. are very frequently used in the Scriptures, both of the Old and Tew Testament.

Here we will only allege some of the plainest and chiefest places. As for instance, the Holy Spirit calls a man's life-time here on earth an *eternity*, or *for ever*, Exod. xxi. 6; Deut xv. 17; 1 Sam. i. 22; Philemon ver. 15.

Secondly, the Levitical priesthood, and divine worship of the Old Testament, which was instituted by God only for a certain time, viz. until the time of Reformation, as the Holy Ghost expresses it, Heb. ix. 10, that is, until the coming of Christ, who is the end of the law. This time, or period, is called an *eternity*, or *for ever*, in the following passages: Exod. xii. 14, 17; chap. xxvii. 21: chap. xxviii. 43; chap. xxix. 28; chap. xxx. 21; chap. xxxi. 16, 17; chap. xl. 15; Levit. iii. 17; chap. vi. 13, 18, 22; chap. vii. 34, 36; chap. x. 9, 15; chap. xvi. 29, 31, 34; chap. xvii. 7; chap. xxiii. 14, 21, 31, 41; chap. xxiv. 3, 9; Numb. x. 8; chap. xv. 15; chap. xviii. 8, 11, 19, 23; chap. xix. 10; chap. xxv. 13; Deut. xviii. 5. These are all said to be *for ever*, *everlasting*, or *perpetual*, and yet were only for a certain period, as is evident to all Christians.

Thirdly, the time before Christ's incarnation, and the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles, in the whole world, is called (*chronois aioniois*) *the eternal age*, Rom. xvi. 25. And the apostle says that Christ appeared in the end of (*ton aionon*) *the eternity*, or *age*, Heb. ix. 26.

Fourthly, in general, and in a complex sense, the periods of time, or the ages, both of this present and the next world, which in some measure both subsist together, and succeed one another, and being linked like one chain, and reach even unto that eternity, when the Son of God, after the consummation of all his works, shall deliver up the kingdom to his Father, and himself, though without the least diminution of his glory, be subject unto him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all, in that only endless and still *eternity* of God, into which at last, all limited or periodical *eternities* shall be changed; or, in the sweetest manner return, as into the head-spring from which they flowed. Heb. xi. 3, compared with Ephes. i. 21; chap. ii. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 28; Rev. xi. 15.

Fifthly, this present wicked world or age, which is to have an end at the coming of Christ, is called by the same word that is rendered elsewhere *for ever*, or *eternity*. St. Matt. xii. 32; chap. xiii. 22, 39, 40, 49; chap. xxiv. 3; chap. xxviii. 20. St. Mark iv. 19; St. Luke i. 70; chap. xvi. 8; chap. xx. 34; St. John ix. 32; Acts iii. 21; xv. 18; Rom. xii. 2; 1 Cor. i. 20; chap. ii. 6, 7; chap. iii. 18; chap. viii. 13; chap. x. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Gal. i. 4; Eph. i. 21; chap. vi. 12; 1 Tim. vi. 17; 2 Tim. i. 9; chap. iv. 10; Tit. i. 2; chap. ii. 12.

N. B. In all these last places of Scripture, the English translation now in use has the word *world*, but the Greek original has the word *aion*, or some of its derivatives, which is nothing like *world*, but properly signifies the present *age*, which must end, though it is called by the same name which is applied to the life to come, and is rendered *for ever*, or *eternity;* but whereby, in these places, can be understood nothing more than the duration or continuance of the time of this wicked age of the world, which is only to last till the coming of Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

To which sort of Eternities the ETERNITY of the evil, and the punishment depending thereon, ETERNAL DAMNATION, as it is called, belongs.

As soon as the evil or sin is severed from the creatures, the punishment thereof ceases.

For *sin is the sting of death*, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Now when this sting comes to be destroyed, then the pain and wounding of death discontinues too; as a fire must go out as soon as it wants combustibles.

On the contrary, so long as the evil, or sin, subsists in the creatures, either within or without, or at least within, so long the punishment of sin will continue upon them both in this and the next world: so long will the wrath of God abide on them; for his indignation resteth upon sinners, so long as they continue in sin.

"He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." St. John iii. 18.

"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." ver. 36.

"God is angry with the wicked every day." Psal. viii. 11.

"Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin: neither say then before the angel that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the works of thine hands?" Eccles. v. 6.

Now, since many thousands of millions of the fallen creatures do not only go on in wickedness to the end of their days in this world, but will also be wicked in the world to come; so it follows that not only in this world or age, but particularly in that which is to come, as being under the severe but just judgment of God, they must be punished according to their deeds done in the body.

Many and terrible are the plagues and punishments which God often in this world inflicts on wicked creatures; but they are nothing to those punishments and torments that will come upon them hereafter. The Scriptures speak of them in the most dreadful terms and phrases, which are enough to make one's hair stand erect. But ah! how horrid and insupportable will they be to endure in reality!

See Deut. xxxii. 34, 35, 40, 41; Psal. vii. 12, 13; Psal. xi. 6; Psal. lxxiii. 17–20; Isaiah xxx. 33; chap. xxxiii. 14; chap. l. 11; chap. lxv. 13–15; chap. lxvi. 24; Ezek. xxii. 14; St. Matt. iii. 12; chap. v. 22, 29, 30; chap. vii. 19; chap. x. 28; chap. xiii. 40–42, 49, 50; chap. xviii. 8, 9, 34; chap. xxiii. 14, 33; chap. xxiv. 51; chap. xxv. 30, 41, 46; St. Mark iii. 29; chap. ix. 42–49; St. Luke xii. 46–48; chap. xiii. 25–28; chap. xvi. 23–26; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9; Heb. ii. 2, 3; chap. vi. 8; chap. x. 29–31; 1 Peter. iv. 17, 18; 2 Pet. ii. 3, 17; chap. iii. 7; Jude ver. 13–15; Rev. xiv. 10, 11; chap. xix. 3, 20; chap. xx. 10, 14, 15; chap. xxi. 8; chap. xxii. 15, 18, 19.

But the punishments of the wicked creatures in the future state will not only be terrible beyond description, but they will also last *eternally*, that is, they will be of a true *aionion* duration, according to their nature. Therefore as I do sincerely believe an *eternal* happiness, so sincerely do I believe an *eternal* damnation; that is, a future condemnation of the wicked, to those punishments of the next world which according to the dialect of the Holy Ghost, may be justly called *eternal* or *aionion*. See St. Matt iii. 12; chap. xviii. 8; chap. xxv. 41, 46; St. Mark iii. 29; chap. ix. 43–48; 2 Thess. i. 9; Jude ver. 7; Rev. xiv. 11; chap. xix. 3; chap. xx. 10. So that in truth no person can accuse me of denying that eternal damnation, wherewith God in his word, has threatened the wicked, without sinning against the ninth commandment, which if any one does, I heartily pray God to forgive him.

But since the very same Spirit of Truth, which so very solemnly threatens the devils and all hardened sinners with eternal damnation, doth also on the other hand in holy writ, with great emphasis testify of God's everlasting and unbounded love towards all his creatures, of the eternal and general redemption of our Saviour, and, in short, of the final renovation and restoration of all corrupt creatures, and consequently of their universal and happy subjection, in the kingdom of God and of Christ, where every creature shall praise God: as has been already shown, and shall be most clearly demonstrated in the 12th chapter of this treatise, you must needs think that as a simple scholar of heavenly wisdom, I am obliged to take both for divine and consistent truths. And therefore I reckon the *eternity of the evil, and the punishment depending thereon*, neither to the first, nor to the second, but to the third sort of eternities described in the foregoing chapter; because such evil, and the punishment thereof, has no *everlasting* root in God, (as the creatures themselves, and the good that is imparted to them by God have) but is of the creatures, and during the created ages sprung up in them of their own creaturely will.

It may be some will say, that the protestations that I believe an eternal damnation, are nothing but a mere pretence and play-work, since my maintaining the Restoration of all things obliges me to believe that such eternal damnation must at last come to an end, and that consequently, my pretended *true eternity of punishments* in the next world, is no eternity at all. To this I answer, that no man, let him be whosoever he will, must pretend to set up for a reformer of the language of the eternal wisdom of God, which calls *olamim*, *aionas*, or *eternities*, not only the absolutely endless duration of the Divine being himself, and of those things which may subsist in him without end, but also such durations of things which are bounded within certain periods of time, as has been fully proved in the preceding chapter, so that the matter is as clear as day-light.

Can the Spirit of Truth justly call a man's life-time on earth, an *aiona*, *age*, *forever*, or *eternity*, which very often falls short of fifty years? With how much more justice may he call that period *eternity*, wherein the evil angels and men, shall, by a just judgment, be banished from the presence of God; which doubtless will contain our short life-time many hundreds of times multiplied? For which reason also, this frightful, long, but just period of the manifested wrath of God, is called in some places of Scripture, not merely *aion*, or *eternity*; but is expressed by

ionas ton aionon, that is *age of ages*, or *eternity of eternities*. Rev. xiv. 14; chap. xix. 3; hap. xx. 10. Lord God preserve us from all his eternity! It will be too long to those that ome into it, and we have no occasion, contrary to truth, to make it still longer than the pirit of Truth hath made it.

Some pretend, that the eternity of evil, and he eternal damnation depending thereon, ust be an absolutely endless eternity, and ist as long as the being of God himself, ecause it is in some places of Scripture, ompared with the eternal happiness of the hildren of God, and its duration expressed in e same words; so that if the eternity of amnation was to cease, we must conclude at of eternal glory must have an end too. t. Matt. xxv. 46; Rev. xiv. 11; chap. xix. 3; hap. xx. 10, compared with chap. xi. 15; hap. xxii. 5.

As plausible as this objection seems to be, o empty it is, if we go to the bottom thereof. Ve will at present answer to it, first, That ll such as advance this objection against e eternal and universal redemption, turn eir own weapon against themselves, and nknowingly participate of a great error, hich they will never own themselves to be uilty of; for, let these people only consider, at if we are obliged to conclude, according their opinion, that the eternity of pain and e eternity of glory must be of an exactly qual extent and length, because they are oth compared together in the Scriptures, and eir duration is expressed in the same words; en it must also necessarily follow, that the vil and punishment depending thereon, must ave been from all eternity, and either without any beginning at all, or must at least have n endless root in God, and consequently be self God, or his creature. This latter is the ase with the eternal glory and happiness. 'or, although the creature's real enjoyment f the eternal happiness and glory begins ere in time, yet the eternal happiness and lory, or the glorious kingdom of God itself, without any beginning, and existed in and ith God, ever since God himself has been, at is, from all inconceivable eternity; and ust therefore, certainly, exist so long as od himself, who is the only source of all e beatitude and glory, shall exist. See t. Matt. xxv. 34, compared with Ephes. i. 4.

If the eternity of the evil is in every respect answer to the extension of the eternity of lory in and with God, then the extension of e eternity of the evil, must be backwards s well as forwards, and consequently has een from all inconceivable eternity, and ver since God himself has existed; the holding of which would resemble the heresy of e ancient *Manichees*, as much as one egg oes another.

Again, if any one would say, that the equaty of these two eternities, of the evil and of e good, is not backwards, but forwards, that , although the evil, to wit, sin and punishent depending thereon, was not without beinning, as the eternal happiness, considered itself, and according to its nature was; yet at the eternity of the evil is without end; nd forwards, of the same extension with the eternity of glory; he must know, that if this extension is not to be the same, as well backwards as forwards, it wants a great deal of being every way alike; and, if my adversary is obliged, to avoid falling into heresy, to shorten it one way, why should not I have liberty, for good and weighty reasons, to cut it short another way?

I answer, *secondly*, that it is altogether false that the Scripture always, whenever it uses the words *aion*, *aionios*, or *for ever*, of two contrary things, thereby necessarily understands an equally long duration of both. I will here only allege three plain passages of Scripture which prove the contrary. Please to look into the Greek text of St. Matt. xii. 32; St. Luke xx. 34, 35; Ephes. i. 21. In these places *this present world*, and the *future*, or *next world*, are compared together, where it is said in the Greek, according to the Scripture style, *en touto to aioni, oute en to mellonti; ton aionos toutou, ton aionos ekinou; en to aioni toutou, en to mellonti*; that is, *this eternity*, or *age*, and the *eternity*, or *age to come*. But by this *eternity*, or *age*, nothing else is meant but *this world*, or the *present period of time*, which has begun with the fall of man, and will end with the coming of Christ; and by the next world is intended that period of *Christ's future reign in his manifested glory*. But if by the words *aion*, *aionios*, *eternity*, or *eternal*, we are always to understand an equally long duration, even when they are used of contrary things, it must necessarily follow from the above quoted texts of Scripture, that the future world, wherein Christ is to reign in his glory, is to last no longer than this present wicked world; for the periods of both worlds are expressed by the Holy Spirit, according to his usual way of speaking, by one and the same word, namely, *aion*, *eternity*, or *age*, as is also the duration of the future damnation and happiness, St. Matt. xxv. 46. But who of the opposers of the Restoration of all things will allow of this, especially as long as by the future world they understand an endless eternity, according to the common hypothesis?

Thirdly and lastly, if our adversaries will absolutely have it so, that the glorious reign of Christ with his elect, and the state of damnation and unhappiness of the poor creatures cast into the fiery lake, must be two equally long eternities, and we should even grant them this too, they would gain nothing at all by it against the blessed doctrine of the Restoration. That economy, therefore, and sort of government of Christ and his elect, during which all enemies must be put under Christ's feet, and all rebellious creatures in reality made subject unto God and Christ, after the abolition of death, and sin which is the sting of death; that economy, I say, will certainly have an end; namely, at that period when Christ's aim is obtained, and the Son himself shall be subject to Him that put all things under his feet. But hereby is not meant that the kingdom of Christ shall cease, which, according to the word of God is to have no end. St. Luke i. 33. But it will rather through such subjection of Christ under God his Father, get an infinitely

greater lustre. So that we must well distinguish between the *particular government of Christ and his elect*, and *the kingdom of Christ and his believers* as one with the kingdom of his heavenly Father. The *first* will certainly cease, and consequently the eternities of eternities, or ages of ages, appointed for it will end; but the *latter* is to last for evermore, or to all eternity. Now, as long as the said eternities or ages of the particular government of Christ are to last and succeed one another, so long will also last the eternities or ages of pain in the fiery lake: for as soon as all eternities are conquered, and every creature is brought to true obedience and subjection under God and Christ, he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Therefore both these eternities are of an exactly like long duration.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the different sorts or degrees of damnation: that is, of the first and second Death, or of the Prisons of the Sea, Death, Hell, and of the Fiery Lake.

All punishing justice, if it be worthy of the name of justice, requires that the punishment be in proportion and according to the nature of the sin, and the situation of the sinner. So we find that even in this world a righteous judge inflicts no greater punishment on a malefactor than his crime deserves; nay, his severest punishments are usually mitigated, and mixed with some mercy.

Now, since those men, who in their unaltered sinful condition are carried off into the other world, and after their departure abide under the wrath of God, (St. John iii. 36,) are not all alike wicked, but some have sinned a great deal more than others, and consequently, through the growth of their inward iniquity are become more conformable unto the devil than others; so it follows of itself, that the punishments which the Divine justice will inflict upon the depraved creatures in the next world, will be unequal, and in proportion to the heinousness and greatness of their crimes; some punishments being very severe and long, and others more tolerable and shorter. This the holy Scripture plainly evidences in several places. St. Matt. v. 22; chap. x. 15; chap. xi. 22, 24. St. Luke x. 12, 14; chap. xli. 47, 48. Wisdom, vi. 5–8.

All punishments inflicted on the creatures for their sin, or whereby their sin is as it were rewarded, both in this, and in the next world, are comprehended in this one word, *Death*; as the Scripture says, *The wages of sin is death*. Rom. vi. 23.

By this we may see the truth of the divine threatening, and how precisely it was fulfilled, and is daily fulfilled before our eyes, when God threatened our first parents, that in the self-same day, that they should eat of the forbidden fruit, they should *surely die*. Gen. ii. 17, compared with chap. iii. 6–10, &c. For, from the moment they sinned, they incurred God's wrath and displeasure, lost the Divine image, got an evil conscience, which put them in fear, anxiety and terror; and, in short, they brought upon themselves all sorts of spiritual and bodily plagues and torments. All this is called, in the language of the Holy Ghost, *death*, and is the wages of sin, or that wherewith sin pays those, who like soldiers, serve and obey it. St. John viii. 34. "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin."

So that if we take the word *death* in its most extensive and complete sense, the beginning of it is not only when we die bodily, and our souls are separated from their bodies; but it had its beginning with all men, in the very moment when sin entered into our nature; because *death* is as naturally in *sin*, as pain is in sickness. Rom. v. 12. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned."

Wherefore the holy Scripture speaks very emphatically of such men as are converted to God in this time of grace, that they have *passed from death unto life*, St. John v. 24; Ephes. ii. 1. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." See also ver. 5, and Col. ii. 13. Consequently they must have been really in death before their conversion, when they were the servants of sin. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Rom. viii. 6.

Now as death has begun in man with sin, so the more sin increases in man, the more the power and violence of death increases also: in the same manner as the pain and corruption of the body increaseth with the sickness. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Rom. vii. 5.

And if men take sin with them out of this world into the next, they likewise carry death with them. If they come to the highest degree of sin and wickedness, (which in the Scripture is called the *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, and the *sin unto death*. See St. Matt. xii. 31, 32; St. Mark iii. 28, 29; St. Luke xii. 10; 1 John v. 16,) and thereby take upon themselves the perfect resemblance of the devil, who seduced them to sin, then they will be banished with him into the outermost regions of darkness and death; that is, precipitated into the lowest hell, or the lake burning with fire and brimstone. St. Matt. viii. 12; chap. xxii. 13; chap. xxv. 30; Deut. xxxii. 22, compared with Rev. xx. 10; ver. 15, chap. xxi. 8.

If I was to give a general and scriptural description of death, which is the wages of sin, that is, of all that which the Holy Ghost means by death, both in this and the other world, it would be as follows:

"Death, as the wages of sin, is nothing else but the miserable and wretched condition of creatures lying under the dominion of sin, and consequently under the wrath of God, eating *of the fruit of their own way*, Prov. i. 31, and *of the flesh*, to which they sowed, *reaping corruption*, Gal. vi. 8, that is, feeling and experiencing through God's just judgment, both in this and the next wortd, all sorts of spiritual and bodily plagues, flowing quite naturally

from their sin and wickedness, and being in proportion and according to the nature thereof; in order that they may be thus convinced, how bad and abominable that is which they have chosen for themselves against the will of God: and so at last, to the everlasting praise and glory of God's justice and mercy, made by these rough and severe means truly subject to God the Father of all spirits, and to his most beloved and only begotten Son Jesus Christ, whom he has appointed Lord over all things, both in this age, and that which is to come." See 1 Cor. xv. 25, 28, compared with Psal. cxlv. 8–10; Psal. cl. 6; Rev. v. 13; Ephes. i. 20–22; Phil. ii. 9–11; Heb. ii. 8.

This description takes in all the different kinds of death which divines generally distinguish by *bodily*, *spiritual*, and *eternal* death: since the painful separation of soul and body, with all foregoing bodily afflictions, (which is usually called *natural death*;) then the want and loss of the divine image and the grace of God, (being called the *spiritual death*;) and lastly, the woful condition of the damned in hell, either in soul alone, or both in soul and body, (which generally goes by the name of *eternal death*;) are in a manner but parts of death, if we take the word in its completest sense.

Concerning the *bodily* or *natural* death in particular, whereby the soul and body of man are separated, it may be justly called according to Scripture, first, with respect to believers, *a passage from death into the true eternal life, a putting off all mortality, or a perfect deliverance from the body of death*, which in this world they were obliged to bear, and carry about them as an heavy burden. And in this view the natural death is so far from being terrible to the righteous, that it is desirable. See 2 Cor. v. 1–9; Phil. i. 23; Rev. xiv. 13; Isaiah lvii. 1, 2; Wisdom iii. 1–4.

But, secondly, with respect to the wicked and unbelievers, we may rightly call it, *a passage out of one miserable land of death into another which is much more miserable and terrible.* See St. Luke xvi. 22, 23.

But the most proper division of death is to distinguish it according to the Scripture, by the *first* and *second death*. It is true that we do not find the name of *first death* in Scripture, but the denomination of *second death* implies it. For if there is a *second death*, there must necessarily be a *first death*, which is antecedent to the second; because, without it, the name of *second death* would be without any meaning. But as the term *second death*, is four times mentioned in Scripture, (see Rev. ii. 11; chap. xx. ver. 6, 14; chap xxi. 8.) it is certainly used with design, and implies a *first death*.

Knowing from what has been said above, that death inseparably hangs together with sin, and as naturally follows upon it, as the wages follow any service, and that sin and death are as much connected as pain and sickness; besides, the holy Scriptures having given us a precise definition of the *second death*, viz. that it is *a lake burning with fire and brimstone*, (see Rev. xx. 14; chap. xxi. 8,) we may easily comprehend what is meant by the *first death*.

The *first death*, therefore, is nothing else but that miserable and painful condition both of soul and body, which men are in while they are under the dominion of sin, and at the same time under the wrath of God; which wretched state began the moment they fell into sin, and if they are not redeemed from it in this present time of grace, it will continue after the separation of body and soul, under many dreadful punishments and torments, and will grow worse and worse, till at the last judgment, they are either delivered from it through the endless mercies of God, being sufficiently humbled, and so found written in the Book of Life. Rev. xx. 12, 15; 1 Pet. iii. 19; compared with chap. iv. 6; Hosea xiii. 14. Or, if the Divine Justice finds it adequate to their iniquity, they are from the first death committed to the second, to receive the full measure of the wrath of God burning over them. Rev. xx. 14, 15; chap. xxi. 8.

This *first death*, if represented by the figure of a tyrant, has as it were, two chief provinces and regions where it bears sway, and exercises its power, viz., First, the province of this present wicked world, and the time before the separation of the soul and body, where men in this world are under the dominion of sin and the power of death. And secondly, the woful rendezvous, or place of torment of the impure souls of the deceased, and the time after the separation of soul and body, until the great day of judgment, where men, going out of this world in an unconverted condition, must remain under the wrath of God and in death, not seeing life.

That not only the unhappy state of men after their decease, but also their sinful condition by nature in this world, where they are servants to sin, is a part of death, the Scripture tells us in plain words, calling such a state, *darkness and the shadow of death*, St. Luke i. 79. Yea, representing them as dead who live in sin, St. Luke xv. 24, 32; Ephes. ii. 1–5; Col. ii. 13; 1 John iii. 14: and that such who live in sensual pleasure *are dead while they live.* 1 Tim. v. 6. They are called *living* because they enjoy as yet a natural life, common with brutes: but they are *dead*, because they want the spiritual life, (Ephes. iv. 18,) which properly distinguishes men from brutes, and makes them truly men, that is, creatures in the image of God.

The doleful regions of the *first death*, into which unbelievers are banished after their dissolution, have many denominations in holy Scripture. They are, for instance, called, *The lower parts of the earth*, Psal. lxiii. 9. *The nether parts of the earth*, Ezek. xxxi. 14–18; chap. xxxii. 18–32. *The pit wherein is no water*, Zech. ix. 11. *The grave, or hell and death*, Psal. xlix. 14, 15; Hosea xiii. 14. *The sides of the pit*, Isaiah xiv. 15, compared with verse 9 and 19. *The darkness and deep*, Psal. lxxxviii. 6, compared with Psal. lxxi. 20. *Darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, St. Matt. viii. 12; chap. xxii. 13; chap. xxv. 30. *Darkness and the shadow of death*, where such have *rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High, sit bound in affliction and iron.* Psalm cvii. 10, 11. *The prison*, 1 Pet. iii. 19. Isai.

xliii. 7. *Hell*, or the place of torment, where the souls of the wicked are *tormented* as in a *flame* of fire, without being able to come at the least drop of water to quench their thirst, which place is separated from the delightful mansions of the blessed by a great gulph. See St. Luke, xvi. 23–28. To these names may be added that of the *abyss* or *bottomless pit*, wherein Satan will be kept prisoner during the blessed *thousand years* of the reign of our Lord and Saviour on the earth. Rev. xx. 2, 3, 7.

All which different names and denominations, sh. w plainly enough that the woful regions of the *first death* must contain several prisons: and in a certain place of Scripture, they are expressly divided into three head-quarters, viz. the *Sea*, *Death*, (so called in a particular manner,) and *Hell*. Rev. xx. 13.

And the difference of these places of confinement designed for the wicked after their departure out of the world, (one being doubtless worse than the other) is grounded on the different degrees of their iniquity, where every convict will be ordered by the righteous Judge of all flesh to a prison of death proportionable to his crime. This is exemplified to us in the conduct of worldly magistrates, by their not committing all prisoners to the same place of confinement, but every one to a gaol, or part thereof, suitable to his offence.

The *second death*, following the first, is that most wretched, most woful, and most unhappy condition of evil men and angels lying under the dominion of sin and the wrath of God, in the *fiery lake*, whom no foregoing judgments have been able to tame, and who therefore, according to their last doom, must receive the full measure of their well deserved punishments, be absolutely excluded from all the grace and mercy of God, during that very long and terrible age wherein the anger of the Most High is to burn against them. See Rev. xix. 20; chap. xx. 14, 15; chap. xxi. 8; chap. iv. 10, 11; St. Matt. iii. 12; chap. xxv. 41, 46; Isaiah xxxiii. 33.

They shall be as unclean dogs cast out of the palace of the King of Heaven, and entirely forsaken of God, and banished from his presence into the most dreadful pain and punishment. See Rev. xxii. 15; St. Matt. viii. 12; chap. xxv. 30; chap. xxiv. 51; Prov. i. 24–32; Isaiah lxv. 13, 14; 2 Thess. i. 9.

So great will be God's wrath upon those who shall be sentenced to the second death, that even the saints of the Lord will not be permitted to intercede for them, not until they have felt the wrath of God in its highest degree; whereof we have instances in some wicked and obdurate men in this world. See 1 John v. 16, compared with Jer. vii. 16; chap. xi. 14; chap. xiv. 11.

Though not all men, dying in an unsanctified condition of soul, and who are after their decease sentenced to the prisons of the *first death*, will become a prey to the *second death*, but some, and without doubt such as are not wicked to the same high degree, nor have had the same means of grace towards their salvation here on earth, as others, will be, through the endless mercies of God preserved from it, as the holy Scripture plainly shews, after having received a sufficient number of stripes for their sins, and being under such punishment cleansed by the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, which even penetrates into the pit wherein is no water; yet all those that get into the prisons of the *first death*, will be greatly tormented through fear of the *second death*; in the same manner as all confined malefactors who deserve to die, must always be in expectation of the punishment of death, though some of them, in consideration of certain circumstances, and through powerful intercession, may not suffer death, but be sentenced to a more tolerable punishment.

That some whose names were not written in the book of life at our Lord's second coming, shall yet be preserved from being cast into the *lake of fire*, or the *second death*, is evident from this, that the book of life shall be opened, after the second resurrection at the general judgment, and many shall be found written therein, and shall be saved from the *second death*, who were not worthy of a part in the first resurrection, nor of reigning with Christ. See Rev. xx. 12, 15; 1 Cor. iii. 15; St. Luke xii. 47, 48.

But the being entirely free from all tormenting fear of the second death, is a peculiar privilege of the faithful conquerers, who during their life time here on earth have been united to Christ, and have suffered him continually to destroy in them the dominion of the devil and sin. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev. ii. 11. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Chap. xx. 6.

Such, dying in the Lord are thenceforth *blessed*, come into no judgment, and therefore into no prison of the first death in the next world, and, consequently cannot be hurt by the second death; (when even the thoughts thereof are a torment to the prisoners of the first death) for they are perfectly passed from death unto life. (See Rev. xiv. 13; St. John v. 24; chap. viii. 51.) When, in the judgment of men, they are said to die, they themselves die not, but it is death which quite dies in and on them, namely, *the body of death*, to whom they wish no better than entire destruction.

From this we may see that the unhappy state of men leaving this world in unbelief, which we commonly express by the word *hell*, or *damnation*, implies much: namely, as Christ says of his Father's house, the dwelling place of the blessed dead, which is generally called *heaven*, that therein are *many mansions*; (See St. John xiv. 2) so it is with the habitation of Satan and all unclean spirits in the other world, or the abode of unhappy deceased men; there is not only one, but several gaols and prisons, where every man dying in wickedness will be sent to a prison adapted to his degree of iniquity, there to continue so long, till, according to the true saying of our Saviour, he has paid *all that is due*, even to the *uttermost farthing*, or *the very last mite*. St. Matt. xviii. 34; chap. v. 26; St. Luke xii. 59. That is, until he has suffered his due punish-

ment, which is to extend itself to every idle word. St. Matt. xii. 36. And this is the meaning of the words, *He that believeth not shall be damned;* St. Mark vvi. 16; that is, he shall be condemned by the divine justice of God, (which is grounded on his eternal love) to such a punishment in the next world, as is adequate to the measure of his iniquity of which he would not suffer himself to be freed in this time of grace.

We may very well express by the words *heaven* and *hell*, if taken in their full latitude, the happy and unhappy state of men deceased, either in faith or unbelief; and need not superstitiously interpose a purgatory, since the ultimate end of all punishments, which God, (who is love, and whose anger is grounded on love) inflicts on the apostate creatures, both in this and the next world, is, to bring them at last to such a pass, that by the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, shed for the reconciliation of the whole world, sin may be destroyed, and *purged out of them.* In which sense, all punishments of God, both here and in the other world, may be called *purgatories*, and we have no reason to look for purgatory only in the world to come; we may find enough of it in this present world, under all sorts of punishments and afflictions.

But if we will not be made good in this gentle purgatory here, then God, who has bestowed so much on his creatures, and therefore cannot let them be irrecoverably lost, must necessarily after our decease, cast us into one which will burn to the lowest hell, and be able to tame and soften the most wicked wretches, if they were even as bad as the devil himself. God will hold it out with them; let them try if they will not believe it. But may the Lord, through his infinite love, preserve all those that will take warning, from such hardness of heart; and grant that we may much rather choose the afflictions of this life, and the reproach of Christ for our purgatory, which are temporal and light, and will procure for us *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17; from which all others that must be drawn to God by the judgments of the next world alone will be forever excluded; although, to the praise of God's endless mercy, they will obtain some grace, after they have been sufficiently humbled.

CHAPTER X.

Of the different Degrees of eternal Glory; or of the First Birth, and After Birth to Salvation.

As there are many degrees of damnation and unhappiness in the other world, so there are also many degrees of happiness and glory. 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, 39, 40–42; Psalm xlv. 14. 15; Sol. Song vi. 8, 9.

The several degrees of happiness in the other world do not only consist, as is most commonly thought, in the difference of the heavenly and divine brightness in which the glorified bodies of the blessed will hereafter shine; but they go much farther, as shall be shewn immediately.

The difference of glory in the next world consists chiefly in the *first birth*, and *after birth* unto salvation. And consequently there are *first born*, and *after born* in the state of salvation.

The *first-born* unto salvation, to whom belongs the heavenly birth-right, are no other than such men, among the fallen creatures, (who must needs be regenerated and created anew, if they would come again to God) who suffer themselves to be regenerated *first*, and, through faith, to be united with Christ *here* in this time of grace, so called in the properest sense.

These are therefore called in Scripture, The *Church of the first-born, who are written in heaven.* Heb. xii. 23. *The first fruits of God's creatures.* James i. 18. Such as *have the first-fruits of the Spirit.* Rom. viii. 23. Besides many more glorious names which they have to shew their pre-eminence above all the rest of mankind, who will at last be saved too by our Universal Redeemer. They are, for instance, called the *Bride of Christ.* Psalm xlv. 9–11; Sol. Song iv. 8, 9, 11; chap. v. 1; St. John iii. 29; Rev. xix. 7; chap. xxii. 17. *The friends of Christ.* St. John xv. 14, 15. They are called his *mother and his brethren.* St. Matt. xii. 49, 50; St. Mark iii. 34, 35; St. Luke viii. 21. His *brethren.* St. Matt. xxv. 40; chap. xxviii. 10; Rom. viii. 29; Heb. ii. 11, 12, 17. *The spirits of just men made perfect.* Heb. xii. 23.

But the Scripture speaks also of a difference between these first-born unto salvation, dividing them, especially in Rev. xi. 18, into three classes; viz. The *servants of God*, or *the prophets; the saints;* and *those that fear the name of the Lord;* and these last are again subdivided into *small and great.* This difference is doubtless grounded, partly, on the different degrees of sanctification to which they attain here; and partly, on the different measure of the spiritual gifts of grace wherewith they are adorned and favoured by God, through Jesus Christ. See Rom. xii. 3–8; 1 Cor. xii. 4–31.

These first-born and first-fruits are represented as being *sealed to the day of redemption; sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.* Eph. i. 13, 14; chap. iv. 30. There is *a mark set upon them.* (See Ezek. iv. 4.) They are sealed with the seal of God *in their forehead.* Rev. vii. 2–8. *The name of God is written upon their foreheads.* Rev. xiv. 1; chap. iii. 20; chap. xxii. 4. *Having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.* 2 Tim. ii. 19.

It is to these *first-born* alone, that the promises of the celestial kingdom and priesthood in the future age belong, (see St. Matt. xxv. 34. Rev. v. 10; chap. xx. 4–6; chap. xxii. 5,) together with all the unspeakable prerogatives and glories which our Lord and Saviour has promised to those who are converted to him on earth, love him with all their hearts, and are his constant followers, whereof, especially the book of the Revelations is full. See Rev. ii. 7, 10, 11, 17, 26–28; chap. iii. 5, 12, 20, 21; chap. xiv. 13; chap. xxi. 7; chap. xxii. 3–5, 14.

This was represented in the Old Testament by the first-born children of the holy patriarchs, who by virtue of their birth-right were entitled to the sovereignty or dominion, as also to the priesthood over the rest of their brethren, and the whole family; Gen. xlix. 3, compared with chap. xxv. 31–34; chap. xxvii. 19, 28, 29. 33–40.

In the place of the *first-born*, God afterwards adopted the Levites among the children of Israel; and the whole tribe of Levi, instead of the first-born, were entrusted with the oracles of God, and invested with the sacerdotal office, as the government of state or royalty was transferred to the tribe of Judah. Numb. iii. 12, 40–51; chap. viii. 5–26; Gen. xlix. 8–10; 1 Chron. v. 1, 2.

And we find that the high prerogative of the spiritual *birth-right* was even prefigured in the Old Testament in general, by all the *first-born* and *first-fruits*, both of clean beasts, and of the fruits of the earth, which God would have sanctified unto him in a special manner, as appears by many places in the *Pentateuch*. Exod. xiii. 2, 12–16; chap. xxii. 29. 30; chap. xxiii. 19; chap. xxxiv. 19, 20, 26; Lev. xxvii. 26; Numb. iii. 13; chap. viii. 16. 17. See St. Luke ii. 22–24; Rom. xi. 16. The *first born* to salvation are those few who in their lifetime find the narrow way to eternal life, and penetrate through the *straight gate;* whereas such as go the broad way of the flesh, leading to perdition, are *many*, yea, the greatest number. St. Matt. vii. 13, 14. St. Luke xiii. 24. The *first-born* are the *few elect*, compared with the *many who are called*, but on the account of their unbelief and disobedience are rejected. St. Matt. xxii. 14; St. Luke xix. 24. These, after the sad example of Esau, (*who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right*) are deprived of the enjoyment of the inexpressible privileges and glories of the heavenly birthright. Heb. xii. 16, 17, compared with Gen. xxv. 33, 34; chap. xxvii. 33–38.

By the *after-born* to salvation, are chiefly meant all the rest of mankind, who in their life-time neglect repentance, and the purification of their souls, selling like Esau, their birth-right for a mess of pottage of lentiles; that is, giving it in exchange for the vanities of this world, and must therefore, after their departure hence, remain under God's wrath, and by the long-lasting and terrible judgments of the next world be humbled and made fit for the participation of some enjoyment of the endless mercies of God, though Christ the universal Saviour and Reconciler of all fallen creatures, and thus, in their way be *regenerated* unto life, *after* the already glorified *first-born* children of God. To the *after-born* belong too, as a supplement, the fallen angels, as we have shewn above.

Although the phrase, *after-born to salvation*, is not to be literally met with in the Bible, yet the thing itself is grounded therein. For, if it be true, that at the last judgment many of the dead that are given up by the *sea*, *death*, and *hell*, as prisons of the first death, will be found written in the book of life; (see Rev. xx. 12, 13, 15, compared with 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20; chap. iv. 6.) and shall be delivered from the full power of the second death; (between whom and the *first-born*, that have part in the first resurrection, and are to reign with Christ during the blessed thousand years, or the day of his glorious marriage, the Scripture expressly distinguishes; see Rev. xx. 5, compared with ver. 12, 13, 15,) yea if it be true, that at last will follow a Universal Restoration of all apostatized creatures through a general subjection, solemnly promised in Scripture; (1 Cor. xv. 24–28; Phil. ii. 10, 11; Rev. v. 13,) then must be true too, that all these together may be justly called *after-born unto salvation*, because they are not of the number of the *first-born*, but will, a long time *after* the glorification of these, be made truly subject unto God, and Christ, and in their way be born again unto life eternal.

Now, of these *after-born* to salvation there are chiefly two sorts. For some are *after-born out of the first death;* and others *after-born out of the second death.*

The *after-born out of the first death* are, as aforsaid, those deceased, who, after the blessed thousand years of Christ's marriage, at the last judgment, will be given up by the *sea*, *death*, and *hell*, and be found written in the book of life. (See Rev. xx. 15, compared with Hosea xiii. 14, and Zech. ix. 11.) And so through the endless mercy of God be saved from the second death and from its full power over them; though the ideas of it will have been great torment to them in the prisons of the first death.

The forerunners of these *after-born* were the spirits unto whom Christ, at his descent into hell, preached the Gospel of their Redemption. 1 Peter iii. 19, 20; chap. iv. 6; Psalm lxviii. 18; Eph. iv. 8–10; Col. ii. 15.

The *after-born out of the second death*, are all the rest of mankind, and the fallen angels, who, under all the foregoing dreadful judgments of the first death, will continue in their wickedness, and therefore must be humbled in the fiery lake, by the most horrible and consummate judgments of the second death, and be brought at last to bow every one of their knees before Christ, and so have their share too in the *eternal redemption obtained by him for us.* Phil. ii. 10, 11; Rev. v. 13; Heb. ix. 12.

That there may be a difference again between these *after-born out of the second death*, as to the time of their restoration, seems very probable by what is said, Rev. xx. 10, compared with ver. 15; as also chap. xxi. 8. For in the first place it is said of some that are cast into the fiery lake, that with the devil they shall be tormented therein for ever and ever; but in the other two places, which likewise speak of such as will be cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone, we do not find this addition, but it is only said that they are *cast* into the lake of fire, and that they shall have *their part* therein. This has, without doubt, a particular signification, since the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures neither inserts nor omits any thing without design.

The very last of all that will be restored are the *blasphemers against the Holy Ghost*, and the seducers of the whole race of men, to wit, *Lucifer with his angels.* St. Matt. xii. 31, 32; St. Mark iii. 28, 29; St. Luke xii. 10; Rev. xx.

10, compared with chap. xi. 15; chap. xxii. 5. These will be obliged to remain prisoners under the divine wrath, without remission of sins, during the whole eternity or age of Christ's reign with his people in the world to come, and through God's just judgments, shall not be restored until that point of time, or just before it, when the future age or world is to be changed into that still or silent eternity, wherein God is to be *all in all*, after Jesus Christ shall have subdued every thing to himself, and brought all into order and harmony. 1 Cor. xv. 28.

Although these *after-born* to salvation, who, in due season, by Christ, the universal Saviour, will be delivered both from the first and second death, will also, after such redemption, receive a blessing with *Esau*, (see Heb. xi. 20, compared with Gen. xxvii. 34–40) and will partake of some beatitude, which the Scripture describes in this manner, *In the name of Jesus they shall bow their knees*, &c. Phil. ii. 10, 11. *Shall be subdued unto Christ*, and thus become the subjects of God, 1 Cor. xv. 28; and shall praise God and the Lamb, Rev. v. 13; yet they will be excluded to all endless eternity, from all the before-mentioned glories, peculiar to the *first-born*, namely, from the *reigning with Christ*, and the *celestial priest-hood*, both during the aforesaid blessed *thousand years*, and all the succeeding *ages of ages:* and thus, in some measure, they will undergo an absolutely endless punishment; that is, they will suffer *pœnam damni*, or sustain the loss of the quite particular prerogative annexed to the *spiritual birth-right*, as *Esau* lost his birth-right. Heb. xii. 16, 17. However, so, that at last, having sufficiently regretted their irreparable loss, they will be very well content with that share of salvation which the infinite grace of God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our universal Redeemer, will give them: and will rejoice at the *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, which the *first-born* shall receive, and will humble themselves to the utmost before them and their glorious head, Jesus Christ. Rev. iii. 9.

Now this entire deprivation of the *birth-right*, together with all the inexpressible pains which they shall have suffered for their sins, both in the *first* and *second death*, will be punishment enough for them: from which eternal damnation most graciously keep us, good LORD GOD.

CHAPTER XI.

What the Scripture meaneth by this present World, the World to come, and the still or silent Eternity.

THE holy Scripture in many places speaks of *this*, or the *present world*; see St. Matt. xii. 32; chap. xiii. 22, 39, 40, 49; chap. xxiv. 3; St. Mark iv. 19; St. Luke xvi. 8; chap. xx. 34; Rom. xii. 2; 1 Cor. i. 20; chap. ii. 6, 7; chap. iii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Gal. i. 4; Ephes. i. 21; chap. vi. 12; 1 Tim. vi. 17; chap. iv. 10; Tit. ii. 12.

In some passages *the world to come* is mentioned; St. Matt. xii. 32; St. Mark x. 30; St. Luke, xviii. 30; chap. xx. 35; Ephes. i. 21; Heb. vi. 5.

And once at least, the *still eternity*, which God inhabiteth is named. "Thus saith the High and lofty One, that inhabiteth *eternity*, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place," &c. Isaiah lvii. 15. And some think there is an intimation of the stillness or quietness of that eternity, in chap. xxxii. 17, 18.

By *this world*, the Scriptures in general mean nothing else but this present *aiona*, or *period of time*, which in so far as it is called the *wicked world*, had its beginning with the apostacy of the creatures, especially the fall of our first parents, whereby sin and death were introduced into the world; and will last until the coming of Christ, when he will judge the anti-christian race of men, and consume and destroy *Antichrist with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming*. See Dan. vii. 26, 27; 2. Thess. ii. 8, compared with Rev. xix. 11, 20, 21; St. Matt. xiii. 39–42. In this period of time, that which is evil always had the sway over that which is good, and will have it to the coming of Christ: see Rev. xiii. 6–8, &c., so that we must not expect constantly better times, but rather that things will grow worse and worse the nearer the coming of the Lord approaches. St. Matt. xxiv. 37–39; St. Luke xvii. 26–30; chap. xviii. 8; 1 Thess. v. 2, 3; 2 Tim. iii. 1–5; ver. 13; Rev. iii. 10; chap. vi. 11; chap. xii. 12. Howbeit I will not deny, but that before the end of this wicked world, or age, there may be made a good beginning and preparation towards a downright reformation in the church of God, through the power of the gospel of the kingdom, which may be preached throughout the whole world; (though under many tribulations and persecutions) for which indeed the words of our Saviour, St. Matt. xxiv. 14; St. Mark xiii. 10, afford us good hopes.

But this is certain, that there will not be a thorough reformation before *the coming of the Son of Man:* and the reason of it is this, because the devil is the prince or god of this world, or age; see St. John xiv. 30; St. Luke iv. 6; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Ephes. vi. 12, and consequently, worketh in the children of disobedience, Ephes. ii. 2, who always were the most numerous in the world, and will be so until the day of the coming of the Lord; but then, and not before, the power of the devil, and the anti-christian kingdom of the beast and the false prophet, will have an end, according to the plain testimonies of Scripture. 2 Thess. ii. 8; Rev. xix. 20, 21.

This *aion*, or period of time, is again subdivided by the holy Scripture into two special periods, or *worlds:* viz. into the *wicked world before the flood*, or into the *old world*, 2 Pet. ii. 5; chap. iii. 6; and into the *present wicked world*, Gal. i. 4, or the age of the world *after the flood*, under the four empires, represented by the four beasts in Daniel's prophecy, which began soon after the deluge, and will, as aforesaid, end at the coming of Christ. See Dan. ii. 31–45; chap. vii. wholly.

By the *world to come*, the holy Scripture does not mean properly and absolutely an endless eternity, but those *aionas*, or long

lasting periods of time, which although they exist already, with respect to Christ and his saints, received by him into glory, yet the full manifestation thereof is to succeed the period of this present wicked world, and will only begin with the coming of Christ, and the commencement of his glorious kingdom, Rev. xi. 15–18; chap. xii. 10, compared with Dan. vii. 14, 26, 27; and will reach to that point of time when both the *first* and *second death* will be entirely abolished, and the Son of God, after all things have been put in subjection under him, (nothing excepted, but his heavenly Father) shall deliver up the kingdom, or the whole restored creation, (which shall until then be under his government,) to God his Father, and himself be *subject unto him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.* Heb. ii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28.

In all these periods of time, the Good, namely, Christ, with his first born brethren, as kings and priests, will for ever and without interruption, rule over the bad, as his and their enemies, and effect the entire *restoration of all things;* that is, he will subdue and reconcile all things unto himself and his heavenly Father, and bring them into that harmony and order, wherein every thing was created in the beginning. See Rev. xi. 15; chap. v. 10; chap. xxii. 5; Dan. vii. 18, 27; 1 Cor. xv. 28; Phil. ii. 10, 11; Col. i 20; Acts iii. 21; Gen. i. 31.

Now, to those periods of time of the holy and righteous world to come, and its manifestation, belong, first, the *thousand years* of Christ's marriage day; the age commonly called the *Millenium* or *Sabbath of Rest*, when Satan shall be bound and confined in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, the first resurrection shall take place, and the first born saints shall reign with Christ on the earth *a thousand years.* See Rev. xx. 1–6; compared with chap. v. 10, and chap. ii. 26, 27; chap. iii. 21.

Also, secondly, to the *next world*, particularly belong all the other *aionos ton aionon*, or *many long lasting periods of time*, which are to succeed the above mentioned thousand years; during which periods all things will be subdued and restored, and at the close of which, Christ will resign the kingdom to the Father, *that God may be all in all.*

By the *still* or absolutely *endless eternity*, wherein God dwelleth, is meant in holy Scripture, that *eternal and endless duration of the uncreated and Divine Being, and the most perfect and unvariable beatitude which he possesses.* Which, with respect to God, has been without beginning, from all inconceivable eternity, and still is going through all created eternities both of this and the next world, and is their very source and principle, but with respect to the creatures, it will not manifest itself in the most perfect manner, till at that point of the created eternities, when Christ after the entire restoration of all things, will give up the kingdom to his heavenly Father, and be subject to him who put all things under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL. In this *still eternity* which will then be manifested to the creatures, and which will, as it were, swallow up the future world, and wherein God is to reign in that true order as is most agreeable to him, there will be no more sensible knowledge nor hearing of that which is called *Devil, Sin, Death, Wrath*, or *Hell*, than there was when all creatures were yet hid in the eternal creating power of the everlasting God, or when in the beginning of the creation, they were yet altogether *very good.* Because every thing that is diabolical, namely, sin, and the first and second death following it, will in the most consummate manner be destroyed, and swallowed up in victory, and the whole creation shall be most perfectly delivered from all evil; and the kingdom, power, and glory shall be given to him to whom it belongs for ever and ever, Amen. See Isaiah lvii. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28; ver. 54–56 compared with ver. 26. See also Rom. viii. 19–23, compared with Gen. i. 31; Job xxxviii. 7; Rev. xxi. 1–5; St. Matt. vi. 13.

The divine subjection of the Son of God, following upon the next world, and belonging to the still eternity, will by no means lessen the glory of Christ and his saints, but will rather be an occasion of something much more excellent and glorious than his former blessed reign, during the thousand years, and in the succeeding eternities of eternities. For as long as these ages last, so long will sin, or at least imperfection, be in many creatures; which at this time will not be fit in general to be ruled immediately by God, and therefore must be governed by mediators. But when the Son of God shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and himself be subject to him that put all things under him, then will neither sin nor imperfection any more be found in any of God's creatures; but they will be as immediately governed by God himself, as the humanity of Jesus Christ is governed by the Godhead, every one according to his nature; and therefore there will be no farther need of government by the mediatorial economy, the design whereof had been merely that *all things might be subdued unto Christ, and under him to God.* 1. Cor. xv. 24, 25, &c.; Phil. ii. 10, 11. Now, when this design shall be completely obtained, then will also cease the means ordered for the obtaining it; namely, the particular sort of government of Christ and his saints, during the thousand years, and the ages of ages following; but the glory of Christ and of his saints in the *future universal subjection in the still eternity*, will be without end.

Whosoever rightly looks into, and well understands this mystery of the difference between *this world*, the *next world*, and the still, or absolutely *endless eternity*, to him the centre of the holy Scripture, and of all the prophecies contained therein are open; because they are partly fulfilled in this world, partly in the future world, and all the rest will be accomplished in the still eternity, in so far as there is a difference between it and the world to come.

From this principle we may also very easily and with the greatest importance answer the objection that is made against the *general restoration*, from St. Matt. xii. 31, 32. It is indeed true, that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, except

the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; those who are guilty of that sin shall have no forgiveness neither in this world or age, nor in the world or age to come, but are in danger of eternal damnation, according to St. Mark iii. 29.

By the world or age to come, in the first mentioned place, without doubt is meant the whole time from the beginning of the Millenium to the last judgment. For within this time not only many millions will be converted to God, and receive forgiveness of their sins, but also many of those that have been lying in the *sea*, in *death*, and in *hell*, as miserable prisoners of the *first death*, will at last, at the opening of the books of judgment, be found written in the book of life, and thus obtain remission of their sins, and be delivered from the full power of the *second death*. See Rev. xx. 12, 13, 15, compared with Hosea xiii. 14; Zech. ix. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 15.

But the blasphemers against the Holy Ghost, and all such who have committed the sin unto death, for whom we are commanded not to pray; 1 John v. 16; and such who have sinned wilfully after having received the knowledge of the truth; Heb. x. 26–29; such who have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; Heb. vi. 6; the professed enemies of Christ and his believers, and among those particularly the *blaspheming beast*, and *false prophet*, who in this world have so long and continually been afflicting and persecuting Christ and his followers, will then, in virtue of God's most holy justice, be treated in the very same manner as they have treated the servants of Christ here: they will be rejected, esteemed accursed, and will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death, partly before and partly after the thousand years, without any grace or mercy; and consequently will obtain no forgiveness of their sins, but be obliged to suffer what their deeds deserve, as the Scripture plainly testifies. See St. Matt. xxv. 41, 46; Rev. xix. 20; chap. xx. 15; chap. xxi. 8; chap. xiv. 9–11.

But it does by no means follow from hence that these sinners can never be cleansed from their sins, and made truly subject unto Christ and God, before or at the expiration of those *ages of ages* which shall succeed the thousand years, or the age to come, when such sinners, together with all other rebellious creatures, shall have been sufficiently punished for their wickedness in the burning lake. Then, instead of contradicting Christ in a presumptuous manner, as they did not only in this world, but even in the day of judgment, (see St. Matt. xxv. 44; chap. vii. 22;) they shall most humbly bow their knees before him, and become heartily subject unto him, and through him be reconciled unto God. See Phil. ii. 10, 11; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28; Col. i. 20.

CHAPTER XII.

Containing the clearest Sentences of the Holy Scriptures which treat of the General Restoration of all Men and corrupt Creatures.

As the centre of the whole Bible, whereat all its contents aim is this, *That in the beginning God created every thing very good; and that by Christ, who is the wisdom and power of God, by whom all things were made at first, all whatsoever is corrupted through sin, must at last be made good again:* so may any one whose eyes are opened to see clearly into this point, find a great many testimonies of this eternal truth both in the books of the Old and New Testament. But we will for our present purpose, only allege some of the plainest sentences.

First, some very plain texts of Scripture, treating of the final restoration of all corrupt men.

Rom. v. 18–21. "Therefore, as by the offence of *one*, judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of *one*, the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life. For as by *one* man's disobedience, *many* were made (or represented) sinners; so by the obedience of *one* shall (the same) *many* be made (or represented) righteous. Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, *Grace did much more abound:* That, as sin hath reigned unto death, *even so might grace reign* through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Rom. xi. 32. "For God hath concluded *them all* (or shut them up together) in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."

1 Cor. xv. 22, 23. "For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive. But every man in his own (or in his particular) order."

These texts of Scripture most evidently show and foretel us, that as really as sin and condemnation came upon and entered into all men, even so really and certainly will righteousness anb life come again into all corrupt men by Jesus Christ: even that true life of God, which alone is the real life of men: and that they shall at last altogether actually enjoy the mercy of God as truly and really as they have felt the power of sin, and have been concluded under unbelief. In short, *That as sin hath reigned* in and *unto death, even so shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.* Now, sin hath reigned in such a manner, that it has actually made all men its subjects, and brought death upon them; therefore, without contradiction, grace must also reign in such a manner as to bring all men again to its obedience, and consequently restore in them righteousness and eternal life. And, indeed, so much the more, because it is expressly said, that grace is not only to abound as much as sin, but even to *abound much more* than sin.

But how can grace be said to abound much more than sin, if, according to the common hypothesis we avow on the one hand, that it is able to justify and save *all* men, but on the other hand deny that it will actually justify and save *all* men? For sin was not only able to make *all* men unrighteous, and to bring death upon them, but it has actually made them *all* in general unrighteous, and brought death upon them.

1 Tim. iv. 10. "We trust in the living

God, who is the Saviour (or Restorer) of *all men*, especially of those that believe."

As really, now, as all true believers are delivered from sin and death by this universal Saviour, so really and certainly must all the rest of mankind be finally delivered therefrom; since otherwise God would be but a titular and not an actual Saviour or Restorer of all the rest of men. For it is not only requisite that a Saviour and Redeemer pay the ransom for the prisoners, but that he also set them actually free from their imprisonment.

St. John xii. 31, 32. "Now is the judgment of this world; (or, now sentence passeth upon this world, and it is, as it were condemned together with its prince;) now shall *the prince of this world be cast out*. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, *will draw all men unto me*."

Here again it is incontestibly shewn, that a little before our Saviour's passion, it had been firmly decreed in heaven by an irrevocable sentence passed upon this world, that the certain fruits and effects of the sufferings and death of Christ should be, that Satan, or the prince of this world, should be entirely divested and cast out of his pretended ungodly sovereignty over mankind: and that, on the contrary, Christ lifted up, or crucified, should at last actually *draw all men*, who before had been subject to the devil, *unto himself*, and thus of necessity, bring them again into their order and subjection under God.

St. Luke xxiii. 34. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

St. John xi. 41, 42. "Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me: and I know that *thou hearest me always*."

In the first of these sentences, Christ prays for the worst of villains under the sun, namely, for his persecutors, and those who crucified him; and consequently for all such too, as have crucified him in his faithful members from the beginning of the world, and those who still persecute and crucify him, and will continue to do so, to the end of this world, or wicked age. Now, his prayer is this, that the heavenly Father will readily forgive their sins, or, that he will once again bring them into the right order of repentance and faith, wherein their sins may be forgiven them. And that this prayer and intercession of Christ, as well as all others which he ever made and does still make, must at last be fully heard and granted, our dear Saviour once for all assures us in the second sentence, taken from St. John xi. 41, 42.

St. Matt. vi. 13. "Deliver us *from evil*: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, *Amen*."

Among the most evident proofs of the blessed general restoration of all mankind, we may also with very good reason reckon this mysterious prayer of our Lord, especially the last petition of it. For it is indisputably true that the Lord hath obliged us to pray therein for all men, without any exception. But what is it that we are to desire for them? That his name may be sanctified by them; his kingdom come into them; and his will be done by and through them, &c. but especially, that he may *deliver* every one of them *from evil*, that is, actually free them from sin and the power of the devil, or from all pain and woe following upon sin, both in this and the next world. In short, that God may, through Jesus Christ, the universal Saviour, justify, convert, and save them. And, indeed, all for this reason; as the conclusion shews, because the kingdom, or sovereignty over all mankind, belongs by no means to the devil, but solely to our dear Lord and God. He alone has the power, and is able to deliver mankind from evil. And lastly, because to him alone, and to no other being, belongs, and will be forever attributed, the glory and honour of this great work, for the execution of which all creatures will bless and praise him to all eternity. See Psal. cxiv. 10, 11; Psal. cl. 6; Rev. v. 13.

You will say, It is true enough that in the Lord's prayer, we pray that God may convert and save all men, without any exception at all, but that does not argue that with respect to all men this will be really done; because the greatest part of them frustrate on themselves the effect of this prayer, by their own constant impenitence.

But hear, ye that make this objection, pray what then, is the meaning of the word, *Amen*, which we are obliged to put as a seal to this most excellent prayer? Is it not as much as to say, *Verily, so be it?* And therefore, must not all the petitions of the Lord's prayer, but especially the last, be certainly granted in favour of every man, as truly and really as the children of God pray for, and desire the good things expressed therein, according to his earnest will, and as surely as they cannot pray in vain? And that we may never doubt of the final accomplishment of the united prayers of the saints, our blessed Saviour has said, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name I will do it." St. John xiv. 13, 14.

And again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Chap. xvi. 23, 24.

And St. John says, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us. And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." 1 John v. 14, 15.

From whence infallibly follows, that although many thousands of men hinder the efficacy of this prayer on themselves in this world, and become a prey to the jaws of hell, yet they will not be able to hinder it for ever and to all endless eternity. That which is good will at last surely conquer that which is evil. God knows how to make those willing that are at present unwilling to be converted unto him; so that such prodigal sons through his grace will be glad to return to their Father's house, after they have long enough felt the torments and miseries of the fiery lake, if it be never so long before it be brought about.

But if it was an unquestionable truth, as

our adversaries pretend, that most men will remain distant from God, and will frustrate on themselves the granting of this prayer, to all endless eternity, then Christ would have taught us to pray not only wavering or double minded, but even in unbelief and lying, and consequently such a prayer as the Spirit of Christ absolutely rejects and condemns, James i. 6–8, compared with 1 Tim. ii. 8, namely, he would have earnestly commanded us to pray for all men without exception, that God might at last convert and save them, and always to add *Amen!* to the end that we might by no means doubt but this our prayer of universal love would be heard, (which universal love that is to extend itself even to the worst of enemies, and from which this prayer is to flow, our Saviour inculcates a little before he gives the instruction in the duty of prayer, see St. Matt. v. 44–48) though nevertheless it was already decreed by God from all eternity, and we were obliged to believe it as a truth, that the greatest part of men, of whom he had foreseen, that during this short lifetime, they would remain in unbelief, and hinder on themselves the efficacy of this prayer, and should therefore not only be greatly punished in the next world (which is true) but that they also should forever and without end remain in the power of sin and the devil, and never be converted.

But, far be it from all believers to impute such a blasphemy to their Redeemer, to have taught them with a feigned faith to pray for things which they think can never be done, and which at the bottom they do not believe. May the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, for endeavouring to make God's children believe such a calumny against their gracious God and dear Redeemer. Since, therefore, we are commanded to pray for the salvation of all men, *without wrath or doubting*, and to *ask in faith, nothing wavering*, we may be assured that it is the absolute will of God that all men shall *be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*. See 1 Tim. ii. 1–8; James i. 6.

Note well, To the texts of Scripture which prove the restoration of all fallen men, may very reasonably be reckoned also those that treat of *God's universal love* towards all men; of *his earnest will* to have them saved in general, and without the least exception; as also those that speak of *universal redemption*, &c. As for instance, Ezek. xviii. 23, 32; chap. xxxiii. 11; St. Matt. xviii. 11, 14; St. John i. 29; chap. iii. 16, 17; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; 1 Tim. ii. 4–6; Heb. ii. 8, 9; 2 Pet. ii. 1; chap. iii. 9; 1 John ii. 2.

From these important articles of faith we may certainly infer the actual restoration of all men; because it is impossible for God to will any thing in vain to all endless eternity; and it is absolutely false, and the utmost derogation of Christ's redemption, to pretend, that he should have shed his most precious and divine blood quite in vain, and without the least blessed effect for but one of his creatures. Not to mention, that God has also most plainly foretold, that the condition of salvation, namely, righteousness flowing from repentance and faith, unto which salvation is infallibly annexed, shall at last be fulfilled with respect to all men, who by Adam's sin are become unrighteous, as has been shewn above, from Rom. v. 18–21.

To the arguments for the restoration of fallen men, belong also with good reason, the places of Scripture that treat either of a past or future *deliverance of some souls out of a middle state of pain*, which is owned by many who oppose the entire and general Restoration. As, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20; chap. iv. 6; Ephes. iv. 8, 9; Psalm lxviii. 18; 1 Cor. iii. 15; Rev. xx. 12, 13, 15, compared with Hosea xiii. 14; Zech. ix. 11; 1 Sam. ii. 6; Rev. i. 18. Those who understand the above cited texts, of a deliverance from a middle state, which they allow of as aforesaid, while at the same time they deny the entire restoration of all men, out of the fiery lake, must, I say, at least grant us thus much, that from the redemption out of a middle painful state, we may with some probability conclude the redemption of such as are cast into the fiery lake, or lowest hell.

But whosoever pondereth that with God there is no respect of persons, will easily conceive, that our conclusion is not only probable, but most true and just. For why should God, who is no respecter of persons, neither in the execution of his justice nor in the display of his mercy, deliver some from a painful condition by Jesus Christ, and not at last others also? It is enough that he punishes some more severely and longer than others, which must be, on account of his most holy justice; because some have sinned more than others.

Secondly, Plain texts of Scripture, treating of the final restoration of all corrupt creatures, and consequently not only of men, but likewise of the fallen angels, (aiming at least plainly at the latter) who in the beginning were of the number of the principal creatures of God.

Psal. cxlv. 9. "*Jehovah* is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

Wisd. xi. 23–26; xii. 1. "But thou hast mercy upon all; for thou canst do all things, and winkest at the sins of men, because they should amend. For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: for never wouldst thou have made any thing if thou hadst hated it. And how could any thing have endured, if it had not been thy will? or been preserved, if not called by thee? But thou sparest all, for they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of souls. For thine incorruptible Spirit is in all things."

Rev. iv. 11. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created."

In these passages we are plainly told, that the mercy of God, or his tender love, does not only extend itself to men, but universally towards all creatures, that through the will of God have their being, and stand in need of mercy; and consequently also towards the fallen angels, as far as they are creatures of God; which tender love of God must necessarily at last effect or bring about the restoration of all corrupt creatures, for it is not a weak or faint, but an almighty love.

Rom. xi. 36. "Out of him, (God) and

through him, and into him, are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen." Thus this important text may be very well rendered. Now if *all things* (to which indisputably belong as well all fallen angels as corrupt men) that are come forth out of GOD, who is love essentially, or out of his everlasting creating power, and are upheld by him, shall return into the same GOD of love, or be pervaded and quite swallowed up by his loving spirit, what, then, will become of sin, which separates God and the creature, and the unhappiness hanging together with it; will it not of necessity, by this returning or reflux of the creatures into God (however without destroying the true difference between the being of the Creator and that of the creatures) be lost and entirely abolished?

Col. i. 16–20. "For by him (Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God) were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. And (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

This passage teaches us the extent of the reconciliation made by Christ, namely, that it extends itself over the whole creation. Therefore the fallen angels must also necessarily have their share in it, for they do incontestibly belong to the *invisible things* created by Christ, and consequently to *all things*, or the *things in heaven* reconciled by him. And though it is true that this reconciliation chiefly concerns corrupt men and angels, that through sin are separated from GOD, nevertheles, all the rest of the creatures partake of and are benefited by it. It affords, for instance, matter of much joy to the holy angels, when, by virtue of this reconciliation, the apostatized creatures are converted to GOD, and thereby anew received into the communion and friendship of these holy spirits, (St. Luke xv. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12; Heb. xii. 22.) It will also be by the energy of this reconciliation, that in time to come the curse which through sin was brought upon the creation, and has mixed itself with it, (Gen. iii. 17; Rom. viii. 20–22,) will be entirely removed from all the rest of the creatures.

Ephes. i. 8–10. "He (God) hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together (or rehead) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, (or, in the heavens) and which are on earth, even in him."

This is another plain testimony of the blessed restoration of all rebellious creatures (that were corrupted through sin) under Christ their true and lawful head; and by the *things in heaven*, which are to be gathered together in Christ, or subdued again under him as their chief, no other creatures than the fallen angels can be meant, who also in several other places in the holy Scriptures are expressly reckoned amongst the *things in the heavens*, (Rev. xii. 7; Eph. vi. 12; ii., 2.) since they were not only formerly celestial creatures, but have even to this day their seat in a certain part of the heavens, viz. in the air; which place they will not lose till just before the blessed millenium, when they will be thrown down from heaven to the earth, from thence into the bottomless pit, and finally into the fiery lake. See Rev. xii. 7–9, compared with Ephes. ii. 2; Rev. xx. 3, 10.

Heb. ii. 8. "Thou hast put all things under his feet: For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him."

1 Cor. xv. 24–28. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death. For he hath put all things under his feet: but when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son of man also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Here we have two more unexceptionable evidences, that *all things* that were created by Christ, shall be made subject unto him, and indeed so subject, that all things will be put under him in that true order in which God in the beginning created them: for this is the import of the original word *upetaxen*.

But that is by no means the true order of the creatures to live in sin, which is altogether *ataxia*, or disorder, and consequently to lie under the wrath of God, and in the fiery lake, or second death. In short, it is to be such a subjection, wherewith *death* (as is expressly added) that is, all that may be called by that name, and therefore not only the *first*, but in particular the *second death*, or *fiery lake*, and consequently sin as the sting of death (1 Cor. xv. 54–56,) will be entirely *abolished*, destroyed, and swallowed up in victory; such a subjection as will be that of Christ's humanity, with his saints under God, yea, such a subjection, according to which, God, who is to be *all in all in all things*, may be *all* too in those creatures that before had been enemies of Christ, and had been lying in the fiery lake; because the expression of *God's being all in all in the creatures*, necessarily implies a state of perfect happiness, and shews that the whole mass of the creatures being made subject unto God and Christ, will be thus pervaded by God's Spirit, and, as one might say, in a sort *deified*, (or made partakers of the divine nature.) God with them, and they with God, in a manner will be but *one spirit*, as the holy Scripture expressly saith of

such as *are joined unto the Lord*, or are subject unto him in truth. 1. Cor. vi. 17, compared with St. John xvii. 21-23; 1 John iv. 16. But this is impossible to be so long as the creatures remain in sin and death; for then they are forsaken of God, and separated from him, which will be the highest degree of punishment in hell. Now if it is true that all creatures, and consequently also the enemies of Christ that are cast into the fiery lake, will be brought into that state of subjection just now described, wherein God will be *all in all*, then it must also be true that sin and all pain following it, which is found in the creatures, and of course the fiery lake too, must at last be altogether annihilated, because, without such an annihilation God cannot be all in all. If any one would object here, that the present forced *subjection* of the devils under Christ and his people, mentioned in St. Luke x. 17, 20, is likewise expressed by the word *upotasseta*, or to be subordinate; and that from hence appears, that, according to the Holy Spirit's judgment, this is the right subjection of evil spirits and damned men, and that, consequently there is no occasion to interpret the places mentioned Heb. ii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 24-28, of a different sort of subjection of the damned: To this I answer, That we must make a distinction between the *commenced* and the *accomplished* or perfect subjection of the apostatized creatures. It is indeed in some measure already the right subjection or subordination of evil spirits and men, when they are in such a manner overcome by the power of the spirit of Christ and his believers, that they are obliged to begin outwardly to bow under them, and to shew them a forced obedience. But it is false that this should be that *perfect* subjection which God requires of his creatures, (among which even the fallen angels are indisputably to be reckoned) since it is only a *commenced* subjection, and will make way for that finally *perfect* and *accomplished* subordination, which according to our Saviour's own words, is this, when the creatures *worship God in spirit and in truth*, and so are not subject to him in a forced and affected manner, but willingly and gladly: for such and no other worshippers and subjects God seeketh. St. John iv. 23, 24, compared with St. Matt. iv. 10. It is evident that St. Luke x. 17, 20, speaks only of a commenced subjection, which makes that which is evil begin to bow a little under that which is good, though at the same time the evil in itself continues to be evil; whereas, Heb. ii. 8, and particularly 1 Cor. xv. 24-28, speaks not only of a merely begun, but *consummate* subjection or subordination of all creatures, and therefore also of the fallen angels and damned men, as I have shown above from the import of the phrase of *God's being all in all* in the creatures.

Phil. ii. 9-11. "God also hath highly exalted him, (Christ) and given him a name which is above every name; that at (or in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and (N. B.) things under the earth: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father."

Rev. v. 13. "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and (N. B.) under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

Psalm cxlv. 10. "All thy works shall praise thee, O JEHOVAH, and thy saints shall bless thee."

Psalm cl. 6. "Let every thing that hath breath praise JAH;" (*or properly*, "Every thing that hath breath shall praise JAH.") Hallelujah.

These sentences again afford us a fine explanation of the before described general subjection of all creatures, according to which every creature, or work of God, and consequently also Lucifer with his angels, shall acknowledge Christ for their Lord, and bless God, and praise him, which cannot be as long as the creatures are in a state of condemnation, wicked, and enemies of God.

1 John iii. 8. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

Whatsoever, therefore, is a work of the devil, and belongs to the serpent's head, or to that government established by him through self-will, in opposition to the kingdom of God, must be destroyed by the Son of God: for that is his office. Now sin in all creatures, as well in Lucifer himself and his angels, as in man seduced by him, is not a work of God, but of the devil, (and belongs to the hellish serpent's head) which Lucifer, by the turning away of his will from God, and thus becoming a devil, has first brought into himself, and the rest of the rebellious angels, and afterwards also into man: Therefore must Christ at last annihilate and utterly destroy sin, together with death, and all unhappiness as its reward, in all creatures, as well apostate angels as fallen men. For if he was not to do this in *all* fallen creatures, he would not destroy *all* the works of the devil, but leave many satanical works undestroyed, and consequently he would not completely execute his office; but be it far from us to think thus of him. For Christ must, as was said before, *bruise the serpent's head*, Gen. iii. 15; and in an unlimited manner *abolish* or undo sin, for which purpose he made a sacrifice of himself, according to Heb. ix. 26. After which bruising of the serpent's head, and abolishing of sin, no other but altogether holy angels and righteous men will remain, in whom *God may be all in all.*

Rev. xxi. 5. "And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful."

This promise is adapted to what we read, Gen i. 31; and shews again that we have no right to exclude one individual creature of all those that are fallen into sin and lie under the curse, from the renovation and final restoration, because the promise absolutely declares that *all things shall be made new.*

St. Mark xvi. 15. "And he (Jesus) said unto them, (his disciples) Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

That is, Go ye forth into all the world, and

proclaim, wherever ye go, the glad tidings that such a Saviour is come, who both can, and really will, in that order of repentance and faith appointed by God for that purpose, take away all sin, and all wretchedness hanging together with it, from all creatures labouring under the same. And that the apostles preached no other Gospel but this, which concerneth all creatures, St. Paul declares in plain terms, Col. i. 23: "If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached (or, is preaching) to every creature under heaven."

Now by what has been said, let all pious Christians, nay, all reasonable men in the world, judge who they are that in the plainest and simplest manner, without false glosses of blind and carnal reasoning, understand the above cited clear testimonies; whether those who hope from them for a general restoration of all things; or those who in a rash manner exclude from the pitying love of God, the universal reconciliation of Christ, and the final renovation, (which in the said texts are extended in an unlimited manner, over God's whole creation,) many thousands of millions of rational creatures.

Of all the places brought from the holy Scriptures against the restoration of fallen angels, that which we find in Heb. ii. 16; is reckoned none of the least considerable, which in the common English translation runs thus, "For verily he (Christ) took not on him *the nature of* angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." From which words the inference is drawn, that since Christ has not taken on him the nature of angels, he consequently cannot have redeemed and reconciled those of them that did not keep their principalities, but rebelled against their Maker, incurring thereby his indignation; and that therefore, they being not redeemed nor reconciled by Christ, can never be restored by him. But let me have never so much regard for the translators of the Bible, yet I must own that the rendering of these words in the aforesaid manner, does not at all express the meaning of the original; which better agrees with the following marginal reading of most large Bibles:—"For verily, he, (Christ) taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold."

Now, Christ's *not taking hold of angels*, does no more signify *his not taking the nature of angels on him*, than *his taking hold of the seed of Abraham* signifies *his taking human nature upon him*. But when it is said of Christ in this place, that *he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham*, it naturally means, that he chooseth, appropriateth unto himself, and regardeth as his own and his peculiar people, the spiritual seed of Abraham, (Gal. iii. 29.) that is, all believers from among the Jews and Gentiles, and that he taketh hold of them as something extraordinary and very precious; that he does not only hold them fast himself, but has also recommended them to the particular care of his heavenly Father, out of whose hands none is able to pluck them, St. John, x. 29. Yea, that he taketh hold of them by receiving them into his most intimate communion and fellowship, even his spiritual consanguinity, and *taking them for his brethren*, according to the foregoing eleventh, and twelfth verses, and following seventeenth verse; in making them joint heirs with him, partakers of his glory, kings and priests in the world or age to come, which God hath not put in subjection unto angels, as we read ver. 5; but unto his Son, and his first born brethren, who are also called *God's elect and the bride of Christ*. In short, *Christ taking hold of the seed of Abraham*, proves the prerogative of the faithful above all creatures both in heaven and in earth.

And what is further the purport of the words, *He taketh not hold of angels?* This we may easily conceive from what has been said. It is not, as I have already observed, that Christ *did not take upon him an angelical nature*; but it means briefly, that Christ has not chosen the angels for such high degrees of glory as those who among men believe in him; that they are not of Christ's brethren, nor are we to have a share in the government and priesthood of the world to come, being only ministers for the heirs of salvation.

Another very strong argument, that this is the most natural and unconstrained sense of the above cited text of Scripture, is because we do not find so much as one place in the whole Bible, where by the *seed of Abraham* is understood the *human nature*, or *whole race of men* in general. And why should *angels* here intend *the nature of the angels* considered in itself?

What has been said, I think, is sufficient to shew evidently, that it is not possible that from the text in question, there can be the least objection raised against the fallen angels being at last restored by Christ. And I am of opinion, that on the contrary, there is rather hid in it a proof for their final restoration. For to that exceeding great and more than angelical glory of Christ's elect in the next world, or age, belongs indisputably too, that *they shall judge angels;* 1 Cor. vi. 3. Which words divines commonly understand of the judgments and punishments unto which the elect will help to condemn the evil spirits, and which is the true sense of that place, but whether it be the entire sense of it, is another question. Now the aim of all punishments in the world or age to come, unto which Christ and his bride will sentence all creatures that have rebelled against him, is this, that they may humble themselves before him, and thus be put in a condition, that at last through the power of his blood, shed for the whole world, and consquently for all creatures in which sin is found, they may be cleansed therefrom, and the diabolical image destroyed, and so may be made subject unto God in truth. Yea, as sure GOD is GOD, that is essentially and invariably *Love* towards all his creatures, and is to be such to all endless eternity, so sure it is, that all his judgments can have no other aim but that which was just now mentioned; let people say what they will against it.

And when this scope of the divine judgment upon the fallen angels (after the example of the proud, but afterwards humbled king of Babylon, (Dan. iv. 31–34, compared with Isai. xiv. 12;) shall be obtained, as cer-

tainly one day or other it must, according to the plain testimony of the word of God, which says (Phil. ii. 10, 11;) that even *all things under the earth*, (viz. damned angels and men, as all divines understand it) *shall bow their knees before Jesus Christ, and confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father:* when, I say, this shall be accomplished, then the fallen angels will be no longer proud devils, but humbled spirits, and truly in such a condition, that God by the Son of his eternal love (by whom both the *visible* and *invisible things were created*, Col. i. 16;) can save them from perdition. For God's maxim, which necessarily flows from his being, is once for all, that God *resisteth the proud* creatures only, *and giveth grace to the humble*,(1 Pet. v. 5,) and indeed without respect of persons, (Rom. ii. 11. Col iii. 25;) be they now called men or angels.

He loves one creature as well as another; although he makes of the one a more glorious vessel than of the other. In this he cannot be hindered neither by the multitude nor heinousness of the sins before committed by the creatures. For, *where sin aboundeth, grace and love shall much more abound*, viz. then when the creature acknowledgeth its sin and by the powerful grace of God leaves off sinning. In fine, that will be done, which is spoken in Rev. xxi. 5. God will *make all things*, that are old and spoiled, *new* again. "*These words are true and faithful.*" *Amen.*

CHAPTER XIII.

Inquiry, whether this sacred Truth may make men careless? Of the excellent usefulness of it: And what is to be thought of the contrary Doctrine.

The *right comprehension* of this holy truth of the Restoration of all Things, cannot make one single man careless, or give him the least occasion or license to sin. For, how can such a doctrine make one careless, which teacheth that the wrath of God abideth on a man as long as he continueth in sin; and that in proportion to the growth and increase of sin in man, so for his torment, the anger of God increases more and more incessantly; insomuch that this tormenting fire cannot be quenched before its combustible, namely sin, is destroyed? which point is the very heart and marrow of this doctrine. If one was to teach, that God would not punish men for their sins in the next world, such doctrine would tend to make them careless. But that cannot be said of us, who believe and maintain the blessed doctrine of the restoration of all things in a scriptural manner, and teach with our beloved Lord Jesus, the universal Saviour and Reconciler of the world, that a man must give an account for every idle word in the day of judgment, unless he repents of it in this life; and consequently, much more for all other and greater sins; and shall not only suffer a certain and most painful punishment for them all in the next world, but also, by the neglecting of this present time of grace, he will deprive himself of the enjoyment of an unspeakable glory; viz. of the heavenly birth-right, or the joint-government with Christ in the world to come, and the celestial priesthood, for ever and ever, so that he will never be able to obtain it again, if even he was to seek carefully with the bitterest tears of repentance to recover it. (Heb. xii. 16, 17, compared with Gen. xxvii. 34–38; Prov. i. 24–31; St. Luke xiv. 24.) Yea, if all the holy angels and elect of God were to make intercession for him in this respect, it would be to no purpose. 1 John v. 16.

But by believing and teaching that all corrupt creatures shall be made good again, and all that is called sin, death, devil, and hell, shall be annihilated or entirely destroyed, we no more make men careless, than Christ and his apostles made men careless, who taught and commanded to teach the same: (St. Mark xvi. 15, compared with Col. i. 23; Gal. i. 8, 9;) as has been shewn sufficiently in the preceding chapter from many plain testimonies of God's word.

If the terrible judgments of the next world, wherewith God threatens all obdurate sinners, were only to last as long as this life-time, it would be a motive more than sufficient to keep all discreet and prudent people from all carnal security. For what discreet person, who has but a little honesty left, would choose to commit for twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years all imaginable wickedness, if he certainly knew that he was at last to die an ignominious death for it, that he was to be hanged, broke on the wheel, or burnt alive? Now, can the fear of such a short punishment, the lasting whereof is altogether disproportionate to the lasting of the sin, in a discreet person overcome or entirely check the inclination to sin? How much more then ought it to restrain a man from sin, when we teach according to truth, that if he does not repent from his heart of all his transgressions in this time of grace, and earnestly follow Christ in self-denial, and regeneration, he will in the world to come, not only be excluded to all endless eternity from all the inexpressible glories annexed to the spiritual birth-right, but that moreover he will be obliged to remain during a terrible long periodical eternity, or perhaps during all those ages of the next world, that is, many thousands of years; in the most horrid and intolerable pain; though at last being humbled in a dreadful manner, he may and will, through the endless mercy of God, obtain some portion of grace after all.

But whose hearts can endure, or whose hands can be strong, in the time that God shall deal thus with them for their sins? Who can bear the thought of enduring such a long and dreadful punishment, for a short life of sin?

The sinners of the old world that perished by the deluge, afford us an undeniable instance of the amazing length of future misery; they were shut up in the woeful prison of the *first death;* almost two thousand and four hundred years, in darkness, misery, and despair, before the Gospel of the grace of God was preached to them by Christ. (1 Pet. iii. 19; chap. iv. 6.) Ah! do but think what they must have suffered during all that terrible

long period! I dare say that it made them lose all their appetite for sin. Now, since the pains of the *first death* are so terrible and lasting, how dreadful beyond conception, and of what long continuance must the intolerable pains of the *second death* be! that lake of fire and brimstone! O how it will torment such who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and make the clear light of the Gospel (which did not shine so bright to sinners of old as it does to us) subservient to their carnal carelessness, and to fortify themselves thereby in their works of darkness, and in all manner of iniquity! See Heb. x. 26–31; Jude ver. 4; 2 Pet. ii. 1–3; Rev. xxi. 8.

But whosoever is of opinion, that, in order to preserve people from all carelessness, it is necessary to threaten them with such painful punishments as are *absolutely endless*, and to last as long as God exists, such a one thinks wrong: For that would not be the truth, and the untruth is not a proper mean for the conversion and salvation of men. God *sanctifieth* us only *through his truth*. St. John xvii. 17.

If absolutely endless punishments had been true, Christ would certainly have held them forth plainly to impenitent sinners: but we do not find that he has done so. With *eternal* or *aionion* punishments indeed he has threatened them; but what is to be understood by that word has been mentioned before, and is best explained by himself, saying, "Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, (namely out of the prison,) till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." (St. Matt. v. 26; St. Luke xii. 58, 59.) "And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes," &c.; ver. 47, 48. Now, this cannot mean as long as God shall exist, but shows incontestibly, a certain term or end of the confinement in the infernal prison; which end will be upon the complete suffering of all well deserved punishments for every sin, of which men do not repent in this time of grace, even idle words and bad thoughts not excepted. St. Matt. xii. 36; chap, xv. 19; 1. Cor. iv. 5; Heb. iv. 12.

Therefore it remains true that this holy doctrine of the *final Restoration of all Things*, is rather the most effectual remedy against all carelessness; and whosoever looks rightly into this truth, will be most powerfully incited thereby to repentance and sanctification.

For, in the *first* place, it demonstrates the absolute necessity of sanctification with the greatest emphasis.

Secondly, it shows the unutterably great preeminence in glory, which those who suffer themselves to be sanctified and cleansed from all sin in their life-time here, will enjoy in the next state above all the rest, who in this time have neglected their sanctification.

Thirdly, it opens most perfectly the sole source and spring of all power to attain unto true sanctification, by representing according to its *breadth*, *length*, *depth*, and *heighth*, the boundless love of God in Christ Jesus; and showing the everlasting, universal, and eternally efficacious merits of our Saviour, and his immense fulness, from which we derive all power for the mortifying of our sins, and becoming truly godly. And, consequently, this enlivening knowledge of the infinite love of Christ tends to fill us *with all the fulness of God*. Ephes. iii. 18, 19.

Fourthly, it banishes from the heart all servile or painful fear, which very much hinders a man's progress in Christianity, (Rom. viii. 15; 2 Tim. i, 7; 1 John iv. 18;) and instead of it, brings a filial fear and love into the soul. For who would not love and adore such a God, whose love towards all his creatures is so immensely great, that he cannot rest, as one may say, till he has recovered all that was lost, and drawn it into the communion of his beatitude! And who would not at the same time in a child-like manner fear that God, who, indeed, on the one hand, is gracious to such as love him, but also, on the other hand, punishes, without respect of persons, all such as sin, and continues his judgments so long, as till the proud and obstinate creature humbles itself before him, approving of the punishment of its transgressions, and suffering the most holy justice of God, as a sharp two-edged sword, to cut off from it the very being and root of sin, in a severe but necessary process? Now, I cannot conceive, how, on the contrary, that doctrine can bring forth such good fruits, according to which we represent to ourselves God, (who is universal and eternal love) as merely endless fury towards most of his creatures, that is, as no God at all.

Fifthly, it shows us the exceeding great and almighty power of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and thereby exceedingly encourages us in our combat against sin. For, if Christ be really such a Saviour, who both can and will actually at last eradicate sin and death out of all creatures; why should not this Almighty Saviour be also able to sanctify *us* through and through, and to deliver *us* now from all unrighteousness?

In the mean while we may allow, that as every thing which is good, even so this holy truth may be abused and misapplied by the wicked to their own ruin and destruction. (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16; Jude, ver. 4; Rom. ii. 4–6; chap. iii. 5–8; Tit. i. 15, 16.) But this cannot prejudice the truth itself, nor make that to be false which is true. Nay, it will rather serve to make the wicked stand the more inexcusable in the day of judgment, and vindicate the divine justice in condemning them for not repenting, though the whole counsel of God was revealed to them. Do not most of those that are called *protestant Christians*, to this day, make a wrong use of the sacred gospel doctrines, and of the faith set forth thereby? But what *protestant minister* will allow that the doctrine of the protestants is hurtful, because it is misapplied?

This holy truth of the restoration of all things delivers all who receive it in the love of it, from all their hard thoughts of God, and from all their anxious scruples about the *universal love*, *mercy*, *holiness*, *justice*, *wisdom*, *omnipotence*, and *truth* of God, because it represents

all the divine attributes in the finest harmony. For, according to this doctrine, how can any person have the least doubt of God's earnest *love* and *mercy* towards all men, yea, towards all his creatures in general, that want to be pitied by him, when he hears, that God is not only *willing* to deliver all from their misery, but that at last he also *will* deliver every one without exception, and grant them all really to enjoy his tender mercies? Do you not think that there is a sufficient inference to be drawn from this doctrine what a *holy* Being that God must be who can have no communication with any thing that is unholy, and cannot suffer the corrupt creatures to come before his face, till they are most perfectly cleansed from all thir sins,so that neither spot or wrinkle thereof can be any more discerned upon them? Ah! how ought men to use all earnest endeavors to be sanctified by times, in order to be soon received into the communion of this holy God, and not be so long banished from him! And whosoever farther considers, with what unspeakably great glory this God rewards all such as make good use of this present time of grace, and how severely he punishes all impenitent sinners and hypocrites for all their sins, not the least excepted, both by the *first* and *second death*, and indeed in such a manner, that in proportion to and according to the nature of the sin, both in severity and duration of the punishment are exactly ordered, (as Christ teaches us in St. Luke xii. 47,48; St Matt. xi. 22, 24; St. Luke x. 12, 14;) and at last will serve to humble the wicked creatures to the utmost before their Creator, and to dispose them to suffer sin to be entirely separated from them. Whosoever, I say, considers this, will own with me, that this God is a most *just* Being, who loves righteousness. And must he not be *infinitely wise* who knows how to bring all his divine counsels to pass without suffering any part of his plan to fail? And must not this God also be *Almighty*,who can in such a manner cast down to the ground all creatures that oppose him, let them be never so strong and numerous, so that at last they must give up the victory, and with all their heart become subject to him? And lastly, if you will also be certain how *true* the holy Scriptures are, which contain the uttered and written words of God, and how all things therein foretold shall be entirely accomplished, do but consider the holy doctrine of the *restoration of all things*, and you will see how it is nothing else but a most exact and perfect fulfilling of the Scriptures, and of every thing that God has manifested therein, concerning his *love, mercy, holiness, justice, wisdom, power*, &c.

By means of this holy doctrine likewise many points in controversy among the different sects in christendom may be determined and decided, and consequently a good foundation laid for the uniting the Christian world, which at present is divided into so many parties. For instance, this holy truth most plainly shews what God's *punishing justice* is, namely, not a tyrannical revengefulness, having for its aim nothing else but the pain and misery of the creatures; but such an holy attribute of the supreme God, which is grounded in his eternal love, and by virtue whereof he must indeed at last let the disobedient creatures, that will not be ruled by his Spirit, forcibly feel what they choose, or punish them both in this and the next world according to equity, as long as they continue in their wickedness: however so, that not the pain itself, which the creatures feel through their own fault, much less an endless duration of such pain, but an eternal destruction of sin, and the entire separation of it from the creatures, is the ultimate end of their punishment, which also at last must be actually obtained.

O how venerable does this right idea of God's punishing justice make it to an enlightened soul! How gladly does the soul bow under it in this time of grace, suffering this holy justice to mortify all that is evil, and to sever it from the soul, though the operation be painful, so that it may not experience the severity of this holy justice in the next world, when the fire of the divine wrath will be all in a blaze.

This holy doctrine likewise shews the right foundation of *divine election* and *eternal reprobation*, and demonstrates both to *Lutherans* and *Calvinist's* as well wherein each party is right, as what they want of the full understanding of this important point. The doctrine of the *Lutherans* is orthodox, which teaches that God with great earnest will have all men saved, and that he also really saves those who during this time of grace come to believe in Christ, and persevere in faith, and that from eternity he has predestinated them for eternal life. But it is without foundation, that therefore they want to exclude to all endless eternity, from all participitation of the divine mercy, the rest in general that do not believe to this elect: and this is owing to their not discerning the great difference between the *prerogative of the heavenly birth-right*, to which is annexed an exceeding great glory, and the *common portion in the blessed subjection* in the kingdom of God. So also what the *Calvinist's* teach, that those shall be actually saved, whom God will have to be saved, is indeed a scriptural truth: But the aditional conclusion is good for nothing: That since but a few men *are* saved, consequently God *will have* but the least number saved. Or, although he does in some sort desire the salvation of all men (as some among them own) yet, say they, he will not really give faith to all men, which in reality is the same with the former. But the holy doctrine of the *restoration of all things*, shews them,that at last all men will actually be made subject unto God, and consequently, every one in his degree, be made happy. Therefore they must indeed in good earnest hold fast the before-mentioned truth, but amend the rest of their doctrine in the following manner, and make this conclusion: Those whom God will have to be saved, will actually be saved. Now God plainly declares in his word, that he *will have all men to be saved*; therefore all men will be really saved at last; though indeed in such a manner, that only the *elect*, or *first-born*, will enjoy the prerogative of the *birthright*, or the joint government with Christ in the world to come,and the rest of men be forced, to undergo the judgment of the *first death*, and perhaps

of the *second death* also, and at last, when they are purged from their sins, be obliged to take up with but a common portion of happiness.

This sacred doctrine is further capable to decide the dispute between us and the *Roman Catholics* about *Purgatory*: For it shews the truth of the *purification of souls* after their departure out of this world, without the least prejudice to the doctrine of Christ's merits or any other important article of faith. The truth of the purification of souls in the next world, as far as it is grounded in the holy Scripture, we must necessarily grant to the *Roman Catholics*, if we would convince them of the rest of their errors respecting *purgatory*; for this we shall never be able to do as long as we deny what the Scriptures affirm concerning it.

The contrary doctrine, which is diametrically opposite to the blessed restoration of all things, teaches: *That but the smallest number, and perhaps not a thousandth part of the fallen creatures, will be really brought again to God, by the universal redemption of Christ; and that the greatest part by far, must remain in everlasting misery so long as God exists.* But far be it from me to impute this doctrine to all protestants in general; for I am persuaded, that, on the contrary, there are many among them, who either entirely approve of the blessed doctrine of the restoration; or if for the present they have not a perfect knowledge of it, yet understand some truths leading to it, and do not dispeople the glorious kingdom of Christ in such a manner as is done by the doctrine just now mentioned. But, however, the number of those being but too great, who with all the faculties of their souls stick close to the said doctrine, and in an unjustifiable manner cry down the holy doctrine of the blessed restoration as a *dangerous heresy*, condemned long ago, though it manifestly exalts the majesty of God in every respect, and aims at the entire destruction of the empire of sin; I cannot help, before I come to a conclusion, admonishing and desiring them in a few words, to take care that their own doctrine be not such as they undeservedly describe ours to be, and not to be too rash in judging and condemning other servants of Christ with their doctrine, which they neither understand nor will understand, and which is so far from teaching any thing that is bad, that it speaks of nothing but what is good. I ask them upon their conscience, whether their above mentioned doctrine, according to which, God and Christ are to have but the smallest number of souls for their share, the most being obliged to remain to all eternity in the empire and under the power of the devil; I ask them, I say, whether this doctrine does not make sin and darkness stronger and more powerful than God, the redemption of Christ, and the Light. I dare say, they will not own it, but it is so in reality, as has been shewn in different places of this treatise. They think, indeed, that men can be most effectually roused from the slumber of their carnal security, and incited to repentance, by confining the real extent of God's mercy only to this short lifetime, and making it of none effect, and depriving all corrupt creatures of it after their decease, to all endless eternity. But they only imagine and think so; and the effects of their good intention are but indifferent. For as this doctrine gives people a notion that immediately after death either a full endless damnation, or the perfect joys of heaven are to begin; it makes them think that if they do but find some good motions within themselves, not leading a vicious life, they must be sufficiently converted, so that it would be impossible for God in the condition they are in to let them be damned forever, but that immediately after their decease he must necessarily receive them into heaven. Therefore they remain indolent in the exercise of their Christian duties, and their highest degree of perfection is but a pharsiaical honesty; but they know nothing of an earnest diligence in sanctification, or a cleansing of themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. And all this is generally occasioned by such teachers who are mortal enemies of the blessed restoration, and who at the same time condemn and persecute true Christianity and piety.

Now, as the doctrine of endless damnation and torment, is no true motive for sanctification, so it is likewise void of all comfort: for if a man's conscience begins to waken, especially at the end of his life, when the devil uses all his power to bring a soul to the utmost despair, and it begins to see that it is not only as bad as the most wicked of men, but as the devil himself, nay, worse, on account of its having so long resisted God in his working out of its salvation: and that therefore it cannot be saved, except the devil himself was to be saved: (and that really there is in some measure a more than diabolical iniquity in man, has been shown in another place of this treatise: for which reason also some men, viz. the Beast and False Prophet, will be cast into the fiery lake a thousand years sooner than the devil himself, according to Rev. xix. 20, compared with chap. xx. 10.) What can the enemies of the Restoration say to such a soul at that time? will their doctrine be able to save it from despair? I say, no. Is it not the blessed doctrine of the Restoration which alone is able to comfort the poor creature, by representing in the most lively manner the everlastingness of God's mercy, and praising most gloriously the infinite power of the merits of Christ, as far surpassing all the might of sin: shewing plainly at the same time the proper end of all God's judgments both in this and the next world to be no other than the destruction of sin and the final and general well-being of all creatures, and by declaring most comfortably, what a great advantage it will be to the souls to submit here in this time under God's holy justice, and to suffer themselves here to be condemned and judged according to their deserts, but then at once to sink down into the abyss of the everlasting mercy of God, and the ever-efficacious merits of Christ? All which is impossible to be effected by the common doctrine of the partial mercy of God, limited only within the time of this world, which doctrine also represents the punishing justice of God as having also for its ultimate end the everlasting pain of the wicked creatures.

Lastly, Let me ask, whether the doctrine op-

posite to that of the blessed Restoration, does not give occasion to atheistical minds to make that cursed mockery which they do of the Scriptures, even to the denying of the being of God? Since indeed, on the one hand this doctrine speaks of a great many glorious things in God; of his love, mercy, grace, omnipotence, truth, &c. but on the other hand, mixes such dogmas therewith, which in a great measure contradict all the former good and glorious things that were spoken in praise of the Godhead, and represent God, consequently, under such a character as it is impossible that any reasonable man should conceive as becoming the Deity, and which may easily make men fall entirely into atheism. For instance, it praises in God,

First, That he has made many glorious promises in his word, and that he is to perform great matters; for example, That he will make *all things new* again that have been spoiled; that he is *willing to convert all men to himself, and to save them*, as also, that he will *destroy the whole kingdom of the devil*, &c. But at last all the great things that God is to do, mean nothing else, according to this doctrine, than that God indeed has promised to do all this, but that in reality only the least part of it shall be fulfilled.

Secondly, The doctrine of endless damnation makes also many fine words of God's compassionate heart, and of his universal love and mercy; but if one comes to examine the affair closely, it amounts to this, *that in reality God is not so merciful and compassionate as a sinful man*. For instance, *David*, who was a man as we are, had so much compassion for his son *Absalom*, that he wished to have died for him, because Absalom died in his sins, and did not go to a very good place; (2 Sam. xviii. 30; chap. xix. 4,) but of our God, who is love and mercy essentially, people would have us believe that with the hour of death *all his mercy* for a man *has ceased to all endless eternity*. But Jesus Christ himself, the eternal truth, and not our own reason, has taught us to make a quite different conclusion. (St. Matt. vii. 11; St. Luke xi. 13.) Which also follows from what the great God also says of himself, Jonah iv. 10, 11.

Thirdly, The before-mentioned doctrine does likewise speak in praise of God, that indeed he hates nothing in his creatures but only what is evil, namely, sin; but that he very much loves the creature itself, or that which is good. Wherefore it is said, that, *Diabolus entitative bonus*, or the devil himself according to his being, is good, and so far as he is the creature of God is not excluded from his love But then, if it is true, what this doctrine adds, that God by punishing his wicked creatures has not for his ultimate end and aim the recovery and restoration, but the endless torment of the creature, then no natural man, who is acute, can possibly make any other conclusion, than that God does not only abhor the evil, but even that which is good, namely, the creature, or the works of his hands. And is it not an easy matter for such a man, when he hears so many contradictory positions, which are altogether given out for true and salutary words of God, to fall away so far as to believe nothing at all for the future of the truth of Scripture? But eternal glory be to the Most High, for having given us to know and to taste with great certainty, from his word, by the revelation of his good Spirit, his majestic, most holy, and alone adorable *Being of Love*, out of whom, through whom, and into whom are all things. By this knowledge, we may be most powerfully preserved from all wickedness and atheism of these latter abominable times. Yea, honour, glory, and praise be to him for ever and ever. *Amen! Hallelujah!*

THE END.

MAY 05 2000

Acme
Bookbinding Co., Inc.
100 Cambridge St.
Charlestown, MA 02129

3 2044 054 129 622

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

WINCHESTER, Elhanan

AUTHOR

The universal restora-

TITLE

tion

Call Number

BX
9941
.A1
S44